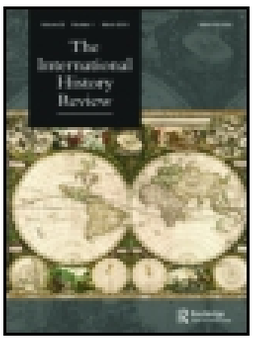

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ABSTRACT

This article explores an episode of post-colonial state violence in the newly independent Zimbabwe, namely state-sanctioned atrocities by the army unit known as Fifth Brigade, perpetrated against the Ndebele of Matabeleland and Midlands region. This episode of political and ethnic violence that occurred between 1983 and 1987 is referred to as both the Matabeleland Massacres and Gukurahundi. Members of the British government in Zimbabwe, which included a British Military Advisory Training Team (BMATT) on the ground, were intimately aware of the violence that resulted in the death of between 10,000 and 20,000 people. This article analyses official British and US government communications between the British High Commission, Harare, and the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office, the Cabinet Office, the Prime Minister's Office and the Ministry of Defence, London, as well as between the US Department of State and the US Embassy in Harare. Analysis of the documents dated between January and March 1983 sheds a critical new lens on Gukurahundi, establishing what knowledge was available to the British and US governments about the persistent and relentless atrocities taking place; the diplomatic approaches pursued by both governments in response; and their rationale for same. The hitherto unavailable material presented here was obtained by Freedom of Information requests to various British Government offices and to the US Department of State. Analysis establishes that the British High Commission, Harare, had detailed knowledge of events unfolding in Matabeleland from an early stage of Gukurahundi, yet senior members of BMATT and the British diplomatic team in Harare, in contrast to their US counterparts, were consistent in their efforts to minimise the magnitude of Fifth Brigade atrocities. That the British government chose to adopt a policy of wilful blindness towards the atrocities undoubtedly constituted naked realpolitik.

KEYWORDS

Zimbabwe; Mugabe; post-colonial violence; ethnic violence; political violence; Gukurahundi; Matabeleland; Ndebele; foreign policy

In January 1983, the Government of Robert Mugabe launched a massive security clampdown in Matabeleland and parts of Midlands, led by Fifth Brigade, a division of the Zimbabwean National Army.[1] This coincided with the imposition of a strict curfew in the region. Thousands of atrocities, including murders, mass physical torture and the burnings of property occurred in the ensuing 6 weeks. Members of the unit told locals that they had been ordered to 'wipe out the people [Ndeble] in the area' and to 'kill anything that was human'.[2] Mugabe named this Korean trained unit 'Gukurahundi Fifth Brigade', a chiShona term that loosely translates to the early rain that washes away the chaff before the spring rains. The

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term Gukurahundi not only refers to Fifth Brigade, but also to the period of political and ethnic violence perpetrated by this unit in Zimbabwe between 1983 and 1985. Gukurahundi resulted in huge losses for the Ndebele people of Matabeleland and parts of the Midlands. Joshua Nkomo (leader of ZAPU), in a letter to Mugabe dated 7 June 1983, estimated that in the first six-week period of Gukurahundi, which commenced on 20 January 1983, Fifth Brigade killed between 3,000 and 5,000 unarmed civilians in Matabeleland North.[3] The West German ambassador to Zimbabwe, Richard Ellerkmann, reported on 11 March 1983 that 'the Churches estimate of total deaths, based on data collected from African sources, is about three thousand'.[4] Shari Eppel, Zimbabwean human rights advocate and forensic anthropologist, estimates the total number of unarmed civilians who died at the hands of Fifth Brigade throughout the entire Gukurahundi period to be 'no fewer than 10000 and no more than 20,000'.[5] Thousands more were beaten, tortured and raped.[6] The arbitrary arrests, detentions without charge, torture, summary executions and rape, suffered by the Ndebele, created an atmosphere of fear and mistrust, which persists to this day between the people of Matabeleland and the Government of Zimbabwe.

This article illuminates the wilful blindness of Margaret Thatcher's Conservative British Government between January and April 1983, when the Zimbabwean state sponsored violence of Gukurahundi peaked. The analysis of this study was undertaken through the prism of hitherto unavailable official British and US government communications pertaining to the Matabeleland massacres, obtained by Freedom of Information (FOI) requests to various British Government Ministries and Offices, and to the US Department of State. This unique dataset provides minutes of meetings and other relevant communications between the British High Commission, Harare, the Prime Minister's Office, the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office, the Cabinet Office and the Ministry of Defence, London, as well as the US Department of State and the US Embassy in Harare. The mining of such rich data permits a unique insight into the role of the British government in Gukurahundi and establishes: what information was available to the British government about the persistent and relentless atrocities taking place against the Ndebele people of Matabeleland North during the early part of 1983; what the British diplomatic approach was in response to this knowledge; and what the British government's rationale was for such policies. Importantly, this data is triangulated by analysis of the US declassified documents.

It must be acknowledged that the documentary material considered in this study is not complete. However, the 2600 pages of documentation analysed, indicates that Robin Byatt, the British High Commissioner in Harare during the peak period of Gukurahundi violence, in addition to his diplomatic team and Major General Colin Shortis,[7] the Commander of the British Military Advisory Training Team (BMATT), were consistent in their efforts to minimise the magnitude of Fifth Brigade atrocities. It is indisputable that this is the general theme of the available cables that were forwarded from the British High Commission, Harare, to London during the period under study for this article. Furthermore, this article will reveal that whilst both the UK and USA were influenced by realpolitik, the US Government demonstrated concern for the victims of Gukurahundi and placed a focus on the development of strategies and policies designed to challenge the state sponsored violence being perpetrated by Fifth Brigade so to end the suffering of the black Ndebele. This was contrary to the approach of the UK government who wilfully turned a 'blind eye' to the victims of these gross abuses. Instead, the Zimbabweans who were of concern to the British government, and influenced their diplomatic approach, were the many white

Zimbabweans living in the affected regions, and who were unaffected by the extreme violence of Fifth Brigade.

The rationale for such naked realpolitik is multi-layered and expressed clearly in numerous communications between Harare and London. This can be neatly summarised here by quoting a cable from the British High Commissioner, Harare, to the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, Geoffrey Howe, on 24 June 1983. He notes that:

> Zimbabwe is important to us primarily because of major British and western economic and strategic interests in southern Africa, and Zimbabwe's pivotal position there. Other important interests are investment (£800 million) and trade (£120 million exports in 1982), Lancaster House prestige, and the need to avoid a mass white exodus. Zimbabwe offers scope to influence the outcome of the agonising South Africa problem; and is a bulwark against Soviet inroads … Zimbabwe's scale facilitates effective external influence on the outcome of the Zimbabwe experiment, despite occasional Zimbabwean perversity.[8]

One can but assume that 'occasional Zimbabwean perversity' refers to Gukurahundi and the summary killings and commonplace torture and rape of tens of thousands of Ndebele.

Photo: National Archives of Zimbabwe Ref 19746. Text on rear reads 'Zimbabwe Army, 5th Brigade Gukurahundi was the name given to the first rains 5th Brigade by the P.M. R.G. Mugabe in 1982 when he handed the Commander Col. Perence Shiri the Brigade flag'.

A British Military Advisory Training Team in the newly independent Zimbabwe

In an effort to negotiate peace in the then Southern Rhodesia, a Constitutional Conference was held at Lancaster House in London between September and December 1979, with the

goal of establishing an Independence Constitution, facilitating internationally recognised independence, and formalising an agreement on holding post-independence elections under British authority. As part of the negotiations, Britain agreed to provide assistance in Zimbabwe's military reorganisation.

In March 1980, the Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) secured over 60 per cent of the vote in the founding independence elections in Zimbabwe held in accordance with the conclusions of the Lancaster House Agreement. The main opposition party, the Zimbabwean African People's Union (ZAPU), led by Joshua Nkomo, secured less than 25 per cent of the vote. Consequently, Robert Gabriel Mugabe became the new country's first Prime Minister on 18 April 1980. Mugabe was immediately confronted with the challenge of uniting a country that had not known a period of sustained peace since the colonial conquest, and which had been in a state of insurrectionary warfare from 1966 until 1979.

A Zimbabwean Joint High Command (JHC) was established in March 1980 to oversee the amalgamation of the three previously warring factions into one Zimbabwean National Army. In accordance with the Lancaster Agreement, a British Military Advisory and Training Team (BMATT) was formed in April 1980 to assist with the process of integration of the previously three warring factions into one unified Zimbabwe National Army (ZNA), and the training for same. British commitment to Zimbabwe's security was significant, with £75 million in training and aid being promised in March 1980.[9]

The ZNA was originally formed into four brigades, compromising a total of 29 battalions posted throughout the country. Mugabe was keen to lessen his dependence on Britain's security role and thus extended an invitation to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) to train an additional brigade. In August 1981, 106 military instructors from North Korea began training an almost exclusive chiShona-speaking brigade known as Gukurahundi Fifth Brigade, a group that consisted solely of ex-combatants from ZANU's armed wing ZANLA (Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army). The significance of this was, first, that the rivalry between ZANU and ZAPU expressed itself as a crude binary between the Shona (who formed a decisive majority in Zimbabwe and from whom Mugabe drew his support) and the Ndebele speakers (who constituted less than one fifth of the population and upon whom ZAPU drew its support). Second, primarily Ndebele inhabited the western part of the country where insurgency activity by disaffected former ZAPU combatants was rooted. The Korean trained Fifth Brigade was distinct from all other military units in the country in that it was not integrated into the ZNA and its commander, Colonel Perence Shiri, did not report to the 'army ops room' as was the case for other brigades.[10]

Post-independence tensions: an opportune justification to wipe out ZAPU?

After independence, longstanding tensions between the two main organisations that had fought the Rhodesian regime, namely the liberation armies of ZANU and ZAPU, intensified. By early 1982, political relations between the political wings of both nationalists had rapidly deteriorated and armed activity against Mugabe's government developed. Zimbabwe was experiencing its most marked security problems in the western half of the country where armed 'dissidents' were reported to be responsible for the killing of civilians and the destruction of property.[11] According to the Lawyers Committee for Human

Rights report of 1986, 'the so-called "dissidents", an amorphous amalgamation of disaffected ex-combatants, disillusioned radicals, and more than a few common criminals, have been waging a campaign of killings and economic sabotage aimed at destabilising the country's economy and undermining support for Mugabe's Government'.[12] These armed insurgents also targeted certain groups of civilians. The dissidents had no acknowledged leadership and no avowed political aims.[13]

Some commentators describe the rationale for this dissident violence as being 'the product of an ill-judged bid on the part of ZAPU to claim the victory it had failed to gain through the ballot box'.[14] For others, land was a priority. Alexander notes that 'dissidents' goals were restorative, a return to the *status quo ante,* to the 1908s' brief peace: they wanted the release of their political and military leaders, the return of confiscated property, a return to ethnic coexistence'.[15] Equally, apartheid South Africa sought to exploit tensions between ZANU-PF and ZAPU, as well as between white and black Zimbabweans, so to undermine its newly independent neighbour.[16] That the apartheid regime armed and controlled 'Super-ZAPU' insurgents as part of a wider strategy of destabilising its neighbours is indisputable.[17] However, the scale of the problem in the west of the country was greatly exaggerated by Harare, who viewed it as an opportune justification to wipe out ZAPU, the only real limitation to Mugabe's total hegemony. Thus, the government of Robert Mugabe responded to the dissident activity with the major security crackdown on Matabeleland and parts of Midlands between 1982- 1987. Fifth Brigade was deployed to Matabeleland North and Midlands on the 20 January 1983.

Gukurahundi and 'the sea in which the enemy fish swim'

From the outset, it was clear that Fifth Brigade were not interested in seeking out dissidents and that their actual target was the civilian Ndebele population. Indeed, US Secretary of State George Shultz noted 'the Fifth Brigade military operations in Matabeleland have succeeded in terrorising, intimidating and alienating the people of Matabeleland, but have had little if any impact – on dissident activities (sic). The problems the Fifth Brigade were sent in to dispel still persist'.[18]

From late January to mid-March 1983, the Fifth Brigade murdered and tortured thousands of civilians, burned hundreds of villages, and raped and pillaged entire communities. On many occasions soldiers would arrive at villages with lists of people affiliated to ZAPU. Those identified from the list would be executed. On other occasions, entire families were herded into grass-roofed huts, which were then set alight. At the end of January 1983 in Mkhonyeni, a pregnant woman 'was bayonetted open to kill the baby'[19] 'whilst pregnant girls were bayoneted to death by 5 Brigade in Tsholotsho in Feb 1983', also killing the babies within their womb.[20] Young Ndebele men between the ages of 16–40 were particularly vulnerable and were frequently targeted and killed whilst others were forced to perform demeaning public sex acts. At Korodzibam February 1983, '5B came to the school and took about 60 pupils aged over 14 years. They were all beaten and asked about dissidents. 20-30 girls were raped and then ordered to have sex with some of the boys while the soldiers watched. They were beaten for 3 hours.[21]

Interviews carried out for the report of the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace in Zimbabwe (CCJPZ) and the Legal Resources Foundations Zimbabwe (LRF) revealed 'There was mass physical torture…intense brutality…and [village members] were

frequently forced to watch others close to them dying slowly from injuries sustained from beating, burning, shooting or bayoneting…Villagers were warned not to seek medical help. Many who were beaten were left with permanent disabilities, ranging from paralysis, blindness, deafness, recurrent miscarriage, impotence, infertility and kidney damage, to partial lameness and recurring backaches and headaches… In addition to the physical injuries, it is clear from interviews that large numbers of people in Tsholotsho suffered some degree of psychological trauma, leading in extreme cases to insanity, and in many cases to recurring depression, dizzy spells, anxiety, anger, or a permanent fear and distrust of Government officials…Children were left without one or both parents, and with the trauma of having witnessed appalling violence against those they loved. Families were left without the consolation of truly knowing the fate of their kin, or their burial places. Many families have had to face practical problems arising from the number of dead for whom death certificates were never issued. This has meant problems gaining birth certificates for children, or drawing money from bank books in the name of the deceased'.[22]

The chiShona-speaking Fifth Brigade repeatedly used a blatantly tribal and political discourse, and, in the execution of their extreme violence, appeared to be militarily unmotivated.[23] On 5 March 1983, US Secretary of State George Shultz claimed that 'what we are addressing is not simply a bad policy choice by the GOZ [Government of Zimbabwe] to deal with a difficult security situation in a section of their country. What is involved is the very fundamental issue of relations between the two parties, between the Ndebele and the Shona (a struggle for dominance dating back a century and a half)'. Of significance, Shultz also noted that the 'mailed fist policy of the Government of Zimbabwe' was directed not only 'against dissidents themselves but against the entire Ndebele populace which is deemed to be the sea in which the enemy fish swim'.[24]

Mr R.P. Ralph, a member of the Secretariat during the Lancaster House Conference wrote a confidential letter to senior staff of the British High Commission, Harare, which he copied to the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) and the Central African Department of the FCO. He noted that a few days previously, during a visit to Bulawayo 16–19 February 1983:

> there was much talk – and evidence – of widespread brutality by 5 Brigade towards villagers. Many people – including women and children – had evidently been killed; precise numbers will probably never be known, but reports of 500 may not be exaggerated…All this was seen in largely tribal terms as a Shona vendetta …In the long term the brutality was seen as creating a tribal powder keg…Everybody I talked to feared some sort of tribal war of the security forces did not stop killing Ndebele…Most people hoped HMG [Her Majesty's Government] 'could do something'.[25]

Handwritten comments on this document, made by FCO staff, note '[s]ome interesting variation on the standard reporting' – presumably referring to the sanitised information on the scale of Fifth Brigade depredations, which they had been receiving from the British High Commission, Harare. An additional comment in a different hand notes '[d]epressing and now rather old but worth reading'.[26] Crucially, handwritten notes confirm that a copy of this letter was forwarded to the Cabinet Office.[27]

The West German ambassador to Zimbabwe, Richard Ellerkmann, thought it 'ominous' that 'Mugabe, in his latest speech in Manicaland, had used the Shona equivalent of 'wipe out' with reference to the Ndebele people, not just ZAPU people, if they didn't stop supporting the dissidents'.[28] However 'most poignant for Ellerkmann was the remark of a

German Jewish refugee in Bulawayo who said the situation reminded him of how the Nazis treated Jews in the Thirties'.[29]

There can be no doubt that Gukurahundi was Zimbabwean government policy. On 7 March 1983 Roland 'Tiny' Rowland, a British businessman and chief executive of the Lonrho conglomerate with heavy economic commitments in Zimbabwe, met with Mugabe and then subsequently reported to the American ambassador in Harare that he was absolutely convinced that Mugabe was 'fully aware of what is happening in Matabeleland and it is Government policy. Munangagwa [sic] [Secretary of State for Security Mnangagwa] is fully aware and he was in the meeting when they discussed the situation in detail. Tiny described Mugabe as blunt and unyielding'.[30]

Gukurahundi only came to an end seven years later with the signing of the Zimbabwean Unity Accord of 1987, which made no recognition whatsoever of the victims of the violence. There was no public admission of guilt for the atrocities or measures proffered for reparations. Instead, a blanket amnesty was offered to all those involved in the Matabeleland Massacres.

Britain's vested interests in the newly independent Zimbabwe

A key British figure throughout this period was Robin Byatt, the British High Commissioner to Zimbabwe (appointed in April 1980). Byatt was to find himself overseeing British diplomatic responsibility in a country that, as noted, very quickly became embroiled in mass state-sponsored political violence. The British High Commissioner was proud that he enjoyed 'a good relationship really' with Mugabe during his posting as High Commissioner in Harare. Byatt's wife Jilly 'was on very good terms with Sally Mugabe [Mugabe's then-wife], who was a charming person'. Indeed Byatt notes that 'Jilly's relationship with her [Sally Mugabe] could be useful in a practical way, trying to get round the Prime Minister's office'.[31]

It was on 14 January 1983 that the FCO in London were made aware by British diplomatic cable from Harare that, as a result of increased dissident activity in Matabeleland in the period leading up to and covering Christmas and the New Year, the Government of Zimbabwe had 'deployed some extra security forces to Matabeleland to little avail'. David McMillan of the British High Commission noted that '[t]he Government's attitude is not encouraging… A further deployment of troops and more toughness will not help if they simply mean more brutality towards the Ndebele peasant. 'Blind swipes' by large numbers of troops are almost bound to be counter productive'.[32] On the same date, during a visit to Zimbabwe, Cranley Onslow, British Minister of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, met with the Zimbabwean Deputy Prime Minister Muzenda and Joshua Nkomo, at which time Nkomo 'pointed out [to Onslow] that the problem [in Matabeleland] is essentially a political one which needs a political solution'.[33]

The following week Fifth brigade, clearly identifiable by their red berets, were deployed to Matabeleland North. Units were assigned particular areas covering the entire district and once deployed they went village to village conducting their shocking spectacle of violence against civilians, civil servants, ZAPU party chairmen, and only very occasionally, dissidents. Within one week, ZAPU parliamentarians had lodged a complaint in parliament that widespread and indiscriminate atrocities were being committed.[34] On the same day, Byatt reported to the FCO that 'at a press conference in Harare…Nkomo claimed that the

security forces had killed many innocent civilians (95 murders reported: by yesterday: 47 confirmed; the figure might now be higher)…in Matabeleland since 22 January. Nkomo said at least some of the murders had been carried out by members of 'support unit' 5 Brigade, who had told the people they were being punished for supporting dissidents and that the Ndebele would be taught a lesson'.[35]

By the last few days of January 1983, violence by Fifth Brigade was raging. Yet despite being in possession of intelligence that '5 Brigade … have beaten up Ndebele workers at a Shangani mine and arbitrarily executed 3 Tsholotsho villagers'[36] Byatt informed London on 28 January 1983 that 'information reaching us up to a few days ago suggested that army brutality in Matabeleland had considerably lessened'.[37] He continued:

> at a press conference in Harare today [28 January 1983] Nkomo claimed that security forces had killed many innocent civilians (95 murders reported: by yesterday: 47 confirmed: the figure might now be much higher) in anti-dissident operations in Matabeleland since 22 January. Nkomo said at least some of the murders had been carried out by members of 'support unit' 5 Brigade who had told the people they were being punished for supporting dissidents and that the Ndebele would be taught a lesson[38]

Nkomo had already discussed his concerns the previous day with acting Prime Minister Simon Vengai Muzenda so 'to seek an end to the carnage'. According to Nkomo, Muzenda 'had been very disturbed and said he would immediately consult with the Ministers of Defence and Home Affairs.[39] Byatt met with the Zimbabwean Minister of Defence, Sydney Sekeremayi, on the same day and 'sought to urge that ruthlessness would merely compound the Government's problem'. However Sekeremayi appeared to Byatt 'convinced that … a "tough line" is inescapable'.[40]

Just over two weeks later, the British defence attaché in Harare noted in a cable to the British Ministry of Defence (MOD) that 'although 1 BDE [Brigade] are still reporting to army ops room 5 BDE are not. I presume COMD [Command] 5 BDE to be operating on the loose direction of [Rex] Nhongo[41] or Sekeramayi', and not the ZNA High Command.[42] The British defence attaché continued 'you [MOD] have some details of 5 BDE excesses. Ministerial statements in the last 24 hours have given full support for their [Fifth Brigade] actions…indications are that they [Fifth Brigade] have been launched as a 'mailed fist' to deal not only with dissidents, but to scare the local population out of providing support for them. We have reports of murders and beatings by 5 BDE. There is no doubt that the situation has seriously deteriorated in Matabeleland'.[43] At this early stage, it appears that the British High Commissioner was unclear on the command structure in relation to the acts of violence been committed by fifth brigade in Matabeleland, however he does claim that there was Ministerial support for the 'murders and beatings by 5 BDE'.[44]

In spite of this knowledge, the British MOD, who had by this point already trained six Fifth Brigade personnel, continued to offer their assistance in the training of Fifth Brigade, including the forty three members of Fifth Brigade who were at that point in time attending courses at the BMATT training base of Inkomo. A copy of this cable was also forwarded to the FCO by the British defence attaché.[45]

Further credible intelligence of ongoing atrocities was available to the British government, including in the form of a letter written by the Catholic Bishop of Bulawayo, Henry Karlen to Mugabe, detailing atrocities witnessed by priests and a German Catholic Missionary Doctor in Lupane. The Catholic Missionary recorded incidents she had witnessed

in the first few days of February, noting that 'in the village of Isilwane in Jibajiba ward … 52 people were killed as the soldiers moved from home to home on February 6 1983'.[46]

Documents obtained from the US Department of State indicate that the US government was in receipt of similar warnings as the British regarding Fifth Brigade. In developing a strategy on policy in response to the issue, the US government noted the 'wisdom [of] letting the British take the lead – and the heat – on Rhodesia and Zimbabwe, based on the UK's historical, colonial role and its political and economic influence in Zimbabwe. The UK is presently still the very predominant foreign influence on the Zimbabwean army, through a large and active military mission there [BMATT]'.[47]

Further reporting 'of atrocities such as appear in the current *Newsweek* publication[48] heightened US concerns 'of 5 Brigade brutality in Matabeleland'[49] resulting in Washington raising these concerns with the FCO, London. The FCO Secretary, Francis Pym, immediately contacted Byatt in Harare noting 'we are considering our recommendations on what action we and the Americans might take to bring our concern to the notice of Mugabe', and thereafter asked Byatt for suggestions.[50] Despite a wealth of credible intelligence, Byatt minimised the situation, reporting back to London that:

> it is extremely difficult to get a really accurate picture of the extent of Fifth Brigade brutality … I have not seen the *Newsweek* article but I understand that its author, Jensen, has a reputation for sensational reporting. He claims to have been to a number of 'operational' areas in Matabeleland and received first hand reports. However he is based in Johannesburg and journalists based there habitually over-colour reports from Zimbabwe…The behaviour of the Fifth Brigade has certainly been brutal but it is Shortis's [BMATT commander] impression that they are not out of control.[51]

Byatt continued that:

> The other side of the coin is that the white farming community (a substantial portion of which is British or dual) are being treated scrupulously correctly by the Fifth Brigade and, while they dislike the methods being used, are relieved that their own security has improved very considerably as a result of Fifth Brigade deployment. Sir Humphrey Gibbs' son told me last night by telephone that people in his area now felt safer than at any time in the past 9 months. Shortis had the same message from other famers there. This is clearly an important element from our point of view.[52]

The cable also advised London that Garfield Todd, a progressive White Zimbabwean and member of the Zimbabwean Senate held a conversation with US Ambassador Keeley, voicing his deep concerns for the Ndebele people and relaying information on the atrocities being perpetrated by Fifth Brigade.[53] Todd reported to Keeley that he had also met with Deputy Prime Minister Muzenda and 'gave him a dossier of cases. Keeley has since heard that Muzenda was shocked by this and passed it to Mugabe (reaction not known)'.[54]

Of note, the US government intimated that 'the UK is presently still the very predominant foreign influence on the Zimbabwean army, through a large and active military mission there'.[55] On the weeks commencing 7 and 14 February 1983, Major General Colin Shortis was presented with valuable opportunities to use this 'predominant foreign influence on the Zimbabwean army' to challenge its leaders on the mounting evidence of atrocities being perpetrated by the army on the Ndebele in an effort to reduce or stop the violence. During these two weeks, Major General Shortis met with Zimbabwean defence minister Sekeramayi, and senior army commanders, Nhongo and Gava,[56] however despite this opportune occasion, Shortis merely advised them that 'the policy of military

repression has dangers and requires careful handling to avoid excesses'.[57] Commenting upon this exchange, Byatt advised London that 'our best course is to continue as we have been doing, proffering 'sympathetic' advice in our working contacts, rather than making a specific formal demarche'.[58] That Major General Shortis should be so reticent to lay bare the concerns of both the British and American governments is perhaps explained by Byatt who notes in his cable to the FCO that 'if they [Sekeramayi, Nhongo, Gava] got the impression that our main concern was our own public opinion to tackle constructively what is a major domestic security threat, they would all too easily stop listening'.[59]

The very same week that Shortis met with Sekeramayi, Nhongo and Gava, Byatt informed the FCO:

> We have received reports of the behaviour of 5 Brigade in Matabeleland from a mission doctor, who has lived in Matabeleland for 14 years and was visiting missions up to 16 February [1983]. He has now returned to Britain and may well make public his evidence … His reports … substantiate allegations of widespread acts of brutality throughout the communal lands where 5 Brigade are deployed. He has personally witnessed many of these acts, and most seem well-authenticated. They range from murder to torture, rape and beatings. Men, women, and children have been victims, often simply because they could not prove they had not assisted dissidents.[60]

The cable continues that:

> 5 Brigade soldiers appear to be obeying orders and to be generally under the control of their officers. Although they may be behaving more viciously than the government intend, the brutality seems systematic and is indiscriminately directed against villagers, to whom they are reported to have said 'all Ndebele are dissidents'. The reports suggest that the number killed since 5 Brigade was deployed may well be substantially more that the couple of hundred I postulated in TUR…I fear these disturbing reports are reliable. I hope we get in the course of the next few days some indication whether Sekeramayi's statement to Shortis that excesses will be curbed, and perhaps Mugabe's reaction to the dossier mentioned in TUR, are in fact leading to improvement[61]

It is perhaps notable that the only sentence highlighted by the FCO upon receipt of the cable is the point that the mission doctor 'may well make public his evidence'.[62] This resonates with Byatt's concerns aforementioned that UK public opinion is of greater concern to the British government than the ongoing 'major domestic security threat' in Matabeleland.[63]

Further independent and credible information was reported a few days later to both Byatt in Harare, and the FCO in London, from a visitor who had stayed in Bulawayo in February. The visitor noted that it was a 'very sobering visit. The situation in Matabeleland seemed very unhealthy and volatile'.[64] However, at a meeting on 28 February between the US Assistant Secretary of State, Africa Office, Chester Crocker and his British counterpart Cranley Onslow, Onslow 'characterised the situation in Matabeleland as marginally less worrisome than initial reports indicated … Both sides agreed on the necessity to watch the situation very carefully and to keep in close touch in an effort, as Onslow put it, "to limit damage"'.[65] Damage to who or what was left unsaid but a later document evidences that one of Onslow's key concerns was 'that the present unstable situation, particularly as portrayed in the press, will give rise to domestic pressures in both the US and UK for policy changes toward the Mugabe regime'.[66]

As a result of Keeley actively seeking out intelligence regarding events on the ground in Matabeleland North, on 26 February the American embassy 'learned that several foreign correspondents will be filing major stories in the next two days on the continuing violence in Matabeleland'.[67] One journalist was said to have 'spoke[n] to over fifty people in places like Bulawayo and Lupane who gave him eyewitness accounts of atrocities committed by Fifth Brigade. He described the situation in the province as "wholesale mayhem" and a "total brutalization" of the populace and agreed to meet with [an embassy official] for a fuller debrief Saturday morning'.[68]

On 28 February, as various news reports were published laying bare the suffering of the people of Matabeleland, British journalist Jeremy Paxman arrived in Zimbabwe with a documentary film crew on a three-week visit. Paxman's arrival unsettled both the BMATT commander Shortis and High Commissioner Byatt to the extent that a decision was taken to visit the Minister of Defence Sekeramayi same day, to express concern 'that govt [Zimbabwean] have not been successful in putting over their side of the case on recent events in Matabeleland particularly to the foreign press and media'.[69] During this meeting with Sekeremayi, which meaningfully employs the collective terms 'we' and 'our', Byatt advised the minister that:

> While we were now improving our local coverage, we were losing out on our case by default on the world scene and in particular the Reuters press release and the quote Africa unquote article. The latter incidentally is freely on sale here, did not help … I suggested that we needed an off the record background brief by himself [Sekeremayi] or Mnangagwa followed by on the record interviews with selected journalists/interviewers to put over their case and the reasons for their actions. We had some discussion in which we agreed that we quote despise journalists unquote but that we needed them. I also pointed out that we needed to demonstrate British support for the Zimbabwe Government in its difficulties.[70]

As evidence mounted, what was taking place on the ground became undeniable and indeed Byatt informed London that 'according to some reports it seems that 5 Brigade brutality towards the civilian population may be continuing. The provincial health inspector told us yesterday that anyone found with a demobilisation card is summarily executed and the families beaten. Charities and church organisations are compiling dossiers and interceding or trying to intercede privately with the government, apparently to little effect as yet'.[71]

By 2 March 1983, the US Secretary of State wrote that there were numerous reports of atrocities being perpetrated by 'the all-Shona brigade', including indiscriminate killings, torture, rape, beatings and the destruction of property 'including, in several instances, entire villages'. Shultz noted that 'there are also reports that as many as 1000 to 3000 people have died'.[72] Two days later, on 4 March, Shultz dispatched a further cable to US diplomatic posts in Africa advising that 'Fifth Brigade's depredations in Matabeleland are of a new order of magnitude compared to previous developments in Zimbabwe in terms of their potential damage to overall US/Zimbabwe relations, apart from their implications for future prospects for peace, stability, and development in Zimbabwe itself'.[73] The following day, 5 March, Shultz informed the American Embassies in Maputo and Dar Es Salaam, that

> Fifth Brigade's activities have been lightly covered in the British Press, however, a detailed report by Nick Worrall datelined Bulawayo appeared in today's Guardian. Worral wrote in part 'At one church refugee centre in a Bulawayo suburb last night, 209 people slept the night on a bare stone floor surrounded by their bundles of possessions. Most were either old men or

> women with small children. One woman said she had fled from her village north of Bulawayo after she and all the other people from the village had been made to lie face down on the ground while soldiers walked along beating them with sticks. She said two men who had tried to get up had been shot dead by soldiers. … an old man from a village 30 miles east of the city said two of his young male relatives were shot dead by soldiers last week. He had left home and was afraid to return'.[74]

The offensive by the Government of Zimbabwe continued, with Minister of State for Security, Mnangagwa, making a public statement on 4 March, at a rally held not far from Lupane. His statement was reported in *The Chronicle*, 5 March 1983. 'He told his audience that [the] government had "an option" of "burning down … all the villages infected with dissidents." He warned "the campaign against dissidents can only succeed if the infrastructure which nurtures them is destroyed." In a supercilious manner he chillingly described dissidents as "cockroaches" and the Fifth Brigade as "DDT" brought in to eradicate them'.[75] The very next day the largest recorded massacre occurred at Ciwale in Northern Lupane with the death of 55 people.[76] 'Mnangagwa, in these statements and in others he made later, made clear plainly that the action against the civilian population of Matabeleland was part of a deliberate state policy'.[77,78]

In an effort to develop a working strategy to deal with the Zimbabwe problem, Chester Crocker, the US Assistant Secretary of State, Africa, wrote to a US delegation visiting Zimbabwe to explain that:

> the reasons for the Mugabe's Government's actions are several and interrelated. Like African leaders since the wave of independence began in 1957, he wants to consolidate his power. In practice this means suppression of the rival, minority, Ndebele tribe by the Shona. This comes against a background of centuries of tribal rivalry … Another core reason for the Zimbabwe Government's action – with important US domestic political ramifications – is the need which Mugabe recognises, to maintain a climate of law and order in Zimbabwe that encourages the still economically necessary white minority to stay.[79]

It is of note that in this same document, Crocker described Mugabe's policy in Matabeleland as 'turning the Fifth Brigade loose on the Ndebele'[80], whilst on the very same day (4 March, 1983) British High Commissioner Byatt met with Minister of Defence Sekeramayi and told him that 'we sympathise with the difficulties his government face in handling the dissident problem. We did not wish to add to these'. Byatt continued, saying he 'thought that Zimbabwe's image and international reputation would suffer badly if the kind of reports which had been appearing recently were to continue over any protracted period of time… I urged him strongly to ensure that excesses were curbed and that, while military force was needed no more was used than was essential to the requirement of the moment. … I said, again speaking personally, that in addition to our concern for Zimbabwe's security and for her international reputation … we had to be particularly careful of the reputation of our army'. Byatt ended by advising London 'I am sure that our best tactic is to continue to try to proffer sympathetic and constructive, rather than simply critical, advice if we wish to influence Zimbabwean decisions'.[81] The rationale for such decision making is undoubtedly multi-stranded, however it is quite clear that one of the major concerns for the British is 'the reputation of [their] army' and British public opinion as opposed to the ongoing atrocities and human violations.

Such was the increasing concern amongst Western diplomats in Harare over the unbridled atrocities taking place, that a meeting was organised at the Canadian High

Commission on 11 March 1983 to share data on conditions in Matabeleland amongst the Chiefs of Mission. Representatives from the major involved Western countries, Canada, West Germany, Sweden, Australia and the United States all attended. Strikingly, the British High Commissioner Byatt failed to attend, with no apology proffered.[82] After this meeting, the Americans concluded 'that conditions are about as bad as they have been reported in the press, if not worse, though there may have been an improvement following the initial Fifth Brigade rampage in late January and early February'.[83] Intelligence collated from 'ZAPU people' by the West German ambassador indicated 'that the terror [in Matabeleland] has been directed mainly against women and children. Fifth Brigade has had little contact with actual dissidents, they say, and in two cases where there was contact, five brigade soldiers fled the scene. ZAPU people insist there was no intention to restore law and order. Rather the operation was purely political – to crush ZAPU and establish a one party state'.[84]

A decision was made during this meeting that individual demarches should be undertaken 'mainly directed at acting foreign minister Nathan Shamuyarira'.[85] Later that same day, Keeley made 'a fairly strong demarche' with acting Prime Minister Simon Muzenda, whilst the Swedish and West German ambassadors met separately with Nathan Shamuyarira to make their demarche'. In the meantime the Canadian ambassador 'had received very broad and soft instructions about a demarche' whilst the Australian ambassador planned to make a demarche at the earliest opportunity but had 'not seen any one high-level yet'.[86] It is notable that the British did not participate in a demarche.[87] As has been noted, Byatt failed to attend the Chiefs of Mission meeting, and Ambassador Keeley reporting back to Washington that the 'UK was conspicuously absent, for reasons I don't know'.[88]

Upon learning of Byatt's failure to appear at the meeting in the Canadian High Commission, Washington wrote to the American ambassadors in both London and Gaborone advising them that:

> Off the record, I want you to know that we don't entirely share the FCO's confidence about how much of a lead their representatives are willing and eager to take. The UK High Commission has always, since independence, cared more about the UK's bilateral relations with the GOZ and has not been inclined to participate in demarches that might cause them damage, though clearly supportive of the overall western interest in this country. One example is that we and the West Germans have worked hard on trying to get the Zimbabwe media to bring more balance to their coverage of east-west issues, but our British colleagues have not joined us in this endeavour.[89]

Washington continued:

> Still off the record, the British High Commissioner leaves here on transfer to London in two weeks' time after nearly a three year tour and a decade of involvement with the Rhodesian problem. He seems somewhat distressed at having to leave at a time when things are going sour. He doesn't want to go out on a low note, that is, a GOZ-UK confrontation over the GOZ's strategy for Nkomo, ZAPU, the Ndebele and Matabeleland … I had an hour long conversation with General Shortis ten days ago before he'd received his instructions on what to say about Matabeleland and found him excessively defensive about what has been going on in Matabeleland and almost an apologist for the GOZ, as well as naïve about the political consequences in the longer term. He obviously has a vested interest in the success of BMATT's armed forces integration exercise and tends to downplay the dangers of a blow-up which would scuttle that long and arduous effort.[90]

As previously noted, a film crew had arrived in Zimbabwe to make a documentary on events in Matabeland. David McMillan of the British High Commission in Harare invited the film presenter, Jeremy Paxman, to dinner on 16 March 1983. After the meeting, McMillan reported back to London that Paxman 'took an unreservedly gloomy and sensational view of recent events in Matabeleland where he has recently spent some 10 days. He [Paxman] claimed that the situation was worse than any other he had covered in his years with the BBC. He did not think that the Zimbabwean Government would much care for the programme he intended to produce, which was due to broadcast on 21 March [1983]'. In his report, McMillan noted that he 'tried to get Paxman to see events in Matabeleland in their true perspective and put it to him that it was difficult to believe that he had seen nothing worse … I would expect next Monday's Panorama to be hard-hitting and likely to displease the Zimbabweans'.[91] One of the more notable parts of the subsequent film was when Jeremy Paxman interviewed BMATT Chief of Staff, Colonel Chuck Ivey. Ivey was excessively defensive and dismissive regarding events in Matabeleland, claiming when questioned 'there are stories out of Matabeleland and stories out of Northern Ireland. Which stories are you going to believe?'[92]

'[Y]ou have to hand it to the British, they know how to behave in this kind of situation'

At Easter 1983, the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops' conference prepared a pastoral statement noting:

> violent reaction against dissident activity has, to our certain knowledge brought about the maiming and death of hundreds and hundreds of innocent people who are neither dissidents nor collaborators. We are convinced by incontrovertible evidence that many wanton atrocities and brutalities have been and are still being perpetrated.[93]

Despite this wealth of 'incontrovertible evidence' being available to the British, in a lunch hosted by Zimbabwean Foreign Secretary of State Witness Mangwende, in honour of Byatt as he left his post, Byatt gave a speech in which noted that 'he was sad to be leaving Zimbabwe after three fruitful and enjoyable years'. He said he was concerned 'about the unsettled parts of Matabeleland and the banditry and dissident activity'. He also went on to state 'we are concerned and deeply regret the suffering caused by these [dissident] attacks and the measures which had to be taken which led to further loss of life'.[94] In this speech, Byatt clearly framed Gukurahundi as a regrettable but necessary reaction to alleged dissident activity. This was the consistent official British approach to the Matabeland Massacres. A few months later, Martin Ewans, successor to Robin Byatt as British High Commissioner in Harare, learned of the admiration of the Zimbabwean Government in relation to the stance taken by the British during Gukurahundi. Ewans informed the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary Geoffrey Howe that the Zimbabwean Minister of Finance, Bernard Chidzero, had commented approvingly that 'at the time of the Matabeleland crisis, how very favourably Mugabe had commented on our demeanour, on the lines of "you have to hand it to the British, they know how to behave in this kind of situation"'.[95]

Byatt was undoubtedly charmed by Robert Mugabe was keen to ensure that the good relations both he and his wife Jilly enjoyed with Robert and Sally Mugabe continued, irrespective of the mounting evidence of state sponsored violence including massacres,

torture and rape. As an aside, Byatt's relationship with Mugabe continued after his appointment as High Commissioner came to an end. On a visit to Zimbabwe some years after leaving the country, Byatt asked the then High Commissioner, Kieran Pendergast, to request a meeting with Mugabe. 'Mugabe's reaction was "[t]he Byatts are coming? Yes, of course, I'd like to see them" and lent [them] a large house'.[96]

Motives behind the British wilful neglect of Gukurahundi

The unique multi-source dataset detailed above highlights how, during the initial and most violent period of Gukurahundi, Robin Byatt, and other High Commission staff, as well as senior BMATT officers, were consistent in their efforts to minimise the magnitude of Fifth Brigade atrocities in their communications with London. This was in contrast to the assessments and analysis of the US diplomatic staff in Harare and the US Department of State, Washington. Furthermore the available data indicates that Byatt was reticent to acknowledge in communications to London, the political and ethnic dimensions driving Gukurahundi, or that the brutalities being perpetrated against the Ndebele were state-sanctioned despite the mounting evidence. When Byatt did inform London of increased violence and instability in Matabeleland North and Midlands it was generally to highlight insecurity and danger for the white community in Matabeleland 'as a result of increased dissident activity' as opposed to highlighting insecurity and danger for the black Ndebele community.[97] In contrast, the data analysed above confirms that despite their policies being driven by realpolitik, the US government adopted a significantly more balanced and victim-centred approach towards the persistent and relentless human rights abuses of Gukurahundi, placing a greater focus on the development of strategies and policies designed to challenge the state sponsored violence, than did the British government.

The rationale for Britain's inertia in Zimbabwe when faced with grave violations of human rights is expressed clearly in numerous communications between Harare and London. This includes Britain's determination to maintain good diplomatic relations with Mugabe so to protect their significant British economic and strategic interests in southern Africa. Britain recognised the critical role Zimbabwe played in southern Africa during this Cold War era. Furthermore Britain had invested substantially in Zimbabwe and enjoyed good trade relations, which they sought to maintain.[98] The dataset also identifies that it was of great importance to Mugabe that the economically viable whites stay in Zimbabwe, whilst it was equally important to the Thatcher government to take measures to prevent the possibility of 'a major exodus' of Zimbabweans to the UK.[99]

A systematic British long-term policy of wilful blindness

What is apparent from the documentary material is that the overarching motivation to maintain a British Military Advisory and Training Team in the country at the behest of Mugabe, and safeguarding positive relationships with his government, was for London's own political, economic and strategic interests. Harare was pivotal to Britain's regional strategy; British overarching concern was the political risk that negative public and parliamentary opinion might cause to their vested interests, and not the

security and protection of the victims of Gukurahundi. This policy was upheld throughout the British establishment. Thus, despite visiting Zimbabwe in November of 1983 when Gukurahundi was still on-going, Malcolm Rifkind, then Minister of State for Europe, when presenting his report on his visit to the House of Commons, made no mention whatsoever of the atrocities. Later, in March 1984, Prince Charles embarked on an official visit to Zimbabwe. On his return to Britain, the Prince lunched with Peter Preston, editor of The Guardian and Donald Trelford, editor of The Observer (who had himself published his own eye witness account of the atrocities in Matabeleland). As Trelford relates, 'In general conversation over lunch, because it was soon after I'd been to Matabeleland and obviously it was a subject to talk about, the subject came up. He [Prince Charles] said "Ah yes, those massacres in Matabeleland, the Foreign Office told me that it was all exaggerated"'.[100] It is in fact emblematic that so indifferent were the British to the state-sponsored atrocities of Gukurahundi that Robert Mugabe was awarded an honorary degree by the University of Edinburgh in 1984 for his services to education after much lobbying by Lord Carrington, the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs 1979–1982. Incredibly, Colonel Perence Shiri, the commander of the Fifth Brigade throughout the period of Gukurahundi, was invited to take a place at the Royal College of Defence Studies in London in 1986.

External institutional bystanders and accountability

In a more general sense, it is quite clear from the documentary material presented here that, apart from the immediate perpetrators, external bystanders have to be held accountable at least to some extent for the unbridled human rights abuses that took place in Zimbabwe in early 1983. The study of Britain's policy towards Zimbabwe throughout early 1983 evidences a series of deliberate acts in the furtherance of the political interests of a dominant state. The minimisation of Gukurahundi by key British figures in Zimbabwe facilitated the advancement of economic and geo-strategic interests in a key area of sub Saharan Africa. One child survivor of Gukurahundi succinctly summarises the unethical role played by Britain in Zimbabwe through its consistent lack of intervention: 'there was this conspiracy of silence that took place in the 1980s'.[101]

When Lord Carrington was asked by journalist Heidi Holland whether he thought that 'Mugabe learned from the fact that he got away with the massacre of thousands of people in Matabeleland in the early 80s' and 'if Mugabe got a sense of his own invincibility from Britain's failure to condemn the outrage convincingly', Carrington replied '"Did we sweep it under the carpet? … I suspect we did, didn't we?…I expect we wished it would all go away, didn't we? So I suppose Mugabe did get away with it, and perhaps that did make him feel he could get away with anything."' Holland puts to Lord Carrington 'It's a pathetic answer isn't it?' to which he responded, laughing, "terrible… I think it's terrible but it's probably the answer. But other than the killing of the Ndebele, it went terribly well under Mugabe at first, didn't it?"'.[102]

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Notes

1. The southwest provinces of Matabeleland and Midlands are mainly populated by the Ndebele, a minority Zimbabwean group.
2. Alexander, Jocelyn, Joanne McGregor, and Terence O. Ranger, *Violence and Memory: One Hundred Years in the 'Dark Forests' of Matabeleland, Zimbabwe* (Heinemann and James Currey, 2000), 222.
3. Joshua Nkomo, 'Informative Letter to Prime Minister Mugabe', 7 Jun. 1983. Available online at http://nehandaradio.com/2013/12/24/joshua-nkomo-letter-to-robert-mugabe-from-exile-in-the-uk/ (Accessed: 7 Mar. 2017).
4. Cable American Embassy, Harare to Secretary of State Washington, DC, 11 Mar. 1983 US/ZM/100.
5. Interview with Shari Eppel, Bulawayo, 2011.
6. Ibid.
7. Major General Shortis was Commander of the British Military Advisory Training Team Zimbabwe from 1983–1983.
8. Cable British High Commission, Harare to FCO London, 24 Jun. 1983, FCO/83/83.
9. Alao, Abiodun, *Mugabe and the Politics of Security in Zimbabwe* (McGill-Queen's Press-MQUP, 2012), 173.
10. Cable British Defence Advisor, Harare to MOD, UK, 4 Feb. 1983, MOD/83/95.
11. Cable British High Commissioner, Harare to FCO, London, 18 Feb. 1982, FCO/82/18.
12. Bill Berkeley, Elliot Schrage, *Zimbabwe: Wages of War* (US: Lawyers Committee for Human Rights, 1986), 7.
13. Ibid, 7.
14. J. Alexander, 'Dissident perspectives on Zimbabwe's Post-Independence War', *Africa*, lxviii.ii (1998), 151.
15. Alexander, Jocelyn. 'Dissident Perspectives on Zimbabwe's Post-Independence War', *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute*, lxviii (1998), 174.
16. Ibid.
17. Ranger, Terence. 'War, violence and healing in Zimbabwe', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, xviii.iii (1992), 698–707.
18. Cable Secretary of State Washington DC to all African Diplomatic Posts, 7 Apr. 1983 US/ZM/128.
19. Catholic Commission for Justice, Peace in Zimbabwe, and Legal Resources Foundation (Zimbabwe). Breaking the Silence, Building True Peace: A Report on the Disturbances in Matabeleland and the Midlands, 1980 to 1988. Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace in Zimbabwe, 1997, 57.
20. Ibid; 23.
21. Ibid; 59.
22. Ibid; 54.
23. Alexander et al., Violence and memory: One hundred years in the 'dark forests' of Matabeleland, Zimbabwe, 218.
24. Cable Secretary of State Washington DC to American Embassy Maputo and Dar es Salaam 5 Mar. 1983, US/ZM/83
25. Letter from R P Ralph to CAFD, FCO, British High Commission, Harare, 24 Feb. 1983, FCO/83/19.
26. The 'received by registry' stamp on the document indicates that this letter was not received by FCO until 14 Mar. 1983.
27. Letter from R P Ralph to CAFD, FCO, British High Commission, Harare, 24 Feb. 1983, FCO/83/19.
28. Cable American Embassy, Harare to Secretary of State Washington DC, 7 Mar. 1983, US/ZM/95.
29. Cable American Embassy, Harare to Secretary of State Washington DC, 11 Mar. 1983, US/ZM/100.
30. Cable American Embassy, Harare to Secretary of State Washington DC, 7 Mar. 1983, US/ZM/88.
31. Recollections of Mr Ronald (Robin) A C Byatt CMG recorded and transcribed by Alasdair MacDermott 24 Feb. 2016. Available online at https://www.chu.cam.ac.uk/media/uploads/files/Byatt.pdf. (Accessed 13 Mar. 2017).

32. Cable British High Commission, Harare to CAFD and FCO London, 14 Jan. 1983, FCO/83/4.
33. Ibid.
34. David Coltart, *The Struggle Continues: 50 Years of Tyranny in Zimbabwe* (Jacana Media SA, 2016).
35. Cable British High Commission, Harare to FCO London, 28 Jan. 1983, FCO/83/6.
36. Ibid.
37. Ibid.
38. Ibid.
39. Ibid.
40. Ibid.
41. Rex Nhongo is the non-de-guerre of Solomon Mujuru, later to become chief of the Zimbabwean National Army. His wife Joice Mujuru became Vice President of Zimbabwe in 2004.
42. Cable British Defence Advisor, Harare to MOD UK, 4 Feb. 1983, MOD/83/95.
43. Ibid.
44. Ibid.
45. Ibid.
46. Alexander et al., *Violence and memory: One hundred years in the 'dark forests' of Matabeleland* (Zimbabwe), 220.
47. Cable Secretary of State Washington DC to US Delegation Secretary, 4 Mar. 1983, US/ZM/78.
48. Week Commencing 14 Feb. 1983.
49. Cable British High Commission, Harare to FCO London, 17 Feb. 1983, FCO/83/12.
50. Ibid.
51. Ibid.
52. Ibid.
53. Ibid.
54. Ibid.
55. Cable Secretary of State Washington DC to US Delegation Secretary, 4 Mar. 1983, US/ZM/78.
56. General Vitalis Zvinavashe, nom-de-guerre Sheba Gava.
57. Cable British High Commission, Harare to FCO London, 17 Feb. 1983, FCO/83/12.
58. Ibid.
59. Ibid.
60. Cable British High Commission, Harare to FCO London, 18 Feb. 1983, FCO/83/15.
61. Ibid.
62. Ibid.
63. Cable British High Commission, Harare to FCO London, 17 Feb. 1983, FCO/83/12.
64. Letter from R P Ralph to CAFD, FCO, British High Commission, Harare, 24 Feb. 1983, FCO/83/19.
65. Cable Secretary of State Washington DC to American Embassy Harare, 26 Feb. 1983, US/ZM/74.
66. Cable Secretary of State Washington DC to American Embassy Harare, 1 Mar. 1983, US/ZM/75.
67. Cable American Embassy, Harare to Secretary of State Washington DC, 26 Feb., US/ZM/72.
68. Ibid.
69. Cable From BMATT Zimbabwe to MODUK Army, FCO, 28 Feb. 1983, MOD/83/94.
70. Ibid
71. Cable British High Commission, Harare to FCO London, 2 Mar. 1983, FCO/83/23.
72. Cable Secretary of State Washington DC to all African Different Posts, 2 March 1983, US/ZM/77.
73. Cable Secretary of State Washington DC to American Embassy Maputo and Dar Es Salaam, 4 Mar. 1983, US/ZM/82.
74. Cable Secretary of State Washington DC to American Embassy Maputo and Dar Es Salaam, 5 Mar. 1983, US/ZM/81.
75. Coltart, The Struggle Continues: 50 Years of Tyranny in Zimbabwe, 143.
76. Alexander et al., Violence and memory: One hundred years in the 'dark forests' of Matabeleland, Zimbabwe, 220.
77. Coltart, The Struggle Continues: 50 Years of Tyranny in Zimbabwe, 143.
78. Mnangagwa is the current vice-President of Zimbabwe, and was until recent months tipped to take over the Zimbabwean Presidency in the next elections in the country due to be held by

the 22 Jul. 2018. Mugabe has however, in the past few weeks, intimated his intention to stand once again as the ZANU-PF candidate in 2018.

79. Cable Secretary of State Washington DC to US Delegation Secretary, 4 Mar. 1983, US/ZM/78.
80. Ibid.
81. Cable British High Commission, Harare to FCO London, 4 Mar. 1983, FCO/83/26.
82. Cable American Embassy, Harare to Secretary of State Washington DC, 11 Mar., US/ZM/100.
83. Ibid.
84. Ibid.
85. Ibid.
86. Ibid.
87. Cable Secretary of State Washington to American Embassy London and Gaborone, 11 Mar. 1983, US/ZM/101.
88. Cable American Embassy, Harare to Secretary of State Washington DC, 11 Mar., US/ZM/100.
89. Cable Secretary of State Washington to American Embassy London and Gaborone, 11 Mar. 1983, US/ZM/101.
90. Ibid.
91. Cable British High Commission, Harare to CAFD and FCO London, 16 Mar. 1983, FCO/83/39.
92. Panorama, 'The Matabele Massacre' film documentary aired by BBC, 21 Mar. 1983.
93. Cable American Embassy, Harare to Secretary of State Washington DC, 29 Mar, US/ZM/125.
94. Cable American Embassy, Harare to Secretary of State Washington DC, 28 Mar, US/ZM/120.
95. Letter from Martin Ewans, British High Commissioner, Harare, to Sir Geoffrey Howe QC, FCO, 24 Jun. 1983, FCO/83/83A.
96. bions of Mr Ronald (Robin) A C Byatt CMG recorded and transcribed by Alasdair MacDermott 24 Feb. 2016.
97. Cable British High Commission, Harare to FCO London, 21 Mar. 1983, FCO/83/45.
98. Cable British High Commission, Harare to FCO London, 24 Jun. 1983, FCO/83/83.
99. Joint paper by MOD and FCO officials, 1983, MOD/83/113.
100. Panorama 'The Price of Silence', film documentary aired BBC, 10 Mar. 2002.
101. Author interview with child survivor of Gukurahundi, Bulawayo, 2011.
102. Holland, Dinner with Mugabe, 66.