

Zimbabwe Lapses Into Anarchy

By NAT HENTOFF

Newspaper Enterprise Association

The BBC's Mike Thomson, in a series of reports from Zimbabwe in early June, spoke to "a Zimbabwean mother and (13-year-old) daughter who are still too afraid to return home after being abducted and repeatedly raped by militiamen from President Robert Mugabe's Zanu-PF party a year ago." (Its symbol is a clenched fist.) Their fear has not lessened despite the new alleged "power-sharing" coalition between Mugabe and the Movement for Democratic Change's Morgan Tsvangirai.

Also still fearful is a woman, Patience, whom Thomson described as carrying a large book with "the names of people tortured, killed, raped or maimed by Zanu-PF mobs last year." Mortuary officials, hospital officials and court clerks covertly helped compile the list.

Thompson asked Patience what would happen if she brought this crimes list to the police or the Ministry of Justice so that those responsible would be prosecuted. (In this "coalition" government, Mugabe is still in tight personal control of the police, the spy service, the criminal justice system and the media.)

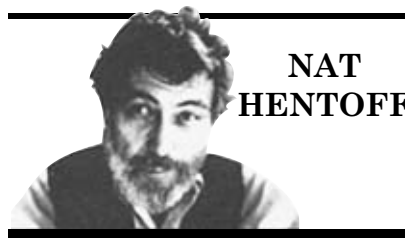
Looking Thomson straight in the eye, Patience answered his question: "I would be killed, even torn to pieces. I definitely believe that."

Explaining the sureness of her conviction, Thomson explained: "She believes they are desperate to destroy evidence like this, which, she says, could put them in court should President Mugabe eventually be forced from government."

Even Mugabe's rapists and murderers do not feel safe in Zimbabwe.

Thomson, who had reason not to feel safe himself in this police state, spoke about the incriminating evidence to the Movement for Democratic Change's Sekai Holland, whose rawly ironic title in this coalition government is: "Minister of State for National Healing, Reconciliation and Integration." Ms. Holland has had acute personal experience in the need for healing since she herself had been beaten so viciously by Mugabe's Zanu-PF surrogates that she was hospitalized for weeks.

"No one feels safe in Zimbabwe. No one," she said, adding that, "different members of the MDC are getting phone calls from people who give the names of people who are going to be



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assassinated (by clenched-fisted Zanu-PF monsters)."

"I think," the minister of State for National Healing, Reconciliation and Integration, continues, "there is a department which meets to plan the survival of Zanu-PF as a ruling party. We are told they do have a list of people they will kill."

There have been many such fulfilled execution lists in the 29 years of Robert Mugabe's reign of horror.

Also interviewed by Thomson in his report was Harare University professor of Politics, John Makumbe.

He predicts: "If the inclusive government does not work,

we are going very close to Somalia. We are going into the scorched earth policy. That is what Mugabe is going to do. Destroy everything in the name of ideology, destroy everyone."

Who is going to stop him? The United Nations is as preeningly hollow as ever.

President Obama is concerned. On June 12, meeting with the Zimbabwe's purported "power-sharing" prime minister, Morgan Tsvangirai at the White House, Obama — as described in a June 13 New York Times headline — "chided" Mugabe. Rather mildly, Obama said of Mugabe that he "has not acted often-times in the best interest of the Zimbabwean people and has been resistant to the kinds of democratic changes that need to take place."

Obama added that he was expecting Tsvangirai to "continue to provide us with direction in ways that he thinks we can be helpful."

But, as Robert Rotberg — president of the World Peace foundation and director of the Harvard Kennedy School's Program on Intrastate Conflict — says bluntly (Boston Globe, June 13):

"Mugabe, insufferably confident and arrogant at 85, hardly wants to be upstaged by his

much younger prime minister. He seeks to protect himself and his security cronies from being investigated for corrupt dealings and human rights abuses. The destruction of a prosperous, largely democratic Zimbabwe happened on their watch. The blood of thousands is on their hands."

Back in Zimbabwe, Thomson is told by a 20-year-old survivor, Tapfuma (who, with his mother, had been beaten unconscious by the Zanu-PF and will not go home under the new coalition government): "Zanu-PF, the people who did this, are still out there. They are still wearing their T-shirts."

Even Tsvangirai, desperately seeking foreign investors in his broken country, is so fearful they will reject any aid reaching Mugabe that on PBS's "NewsHour with Jim Lehrer" (June 11), Tsvangirai said:

"I think that the new political dispensation represents a new Zimbabwe, which is looking forward to reconstruction, to reconciliation, and economic recovery."

How Mugabe must have smiled when told about that painfully false homage.

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Thought for Today

"Be of good courage and he shall strengthen your heart, all ye that hope in the Lord." Psalm 31:24

South Georgia May Lose 6 House, 2 Senate Seats

There was some good news for South Georgia (Sea Island), Glynn County reported in *The Brunswick Daily* that the state House of Representatives has always the case?

First the good news is that the state House of Representatives reports that Glynn County has grown by about 18 percent since the last census. The county seats, including Glynn County, are currently held by the majority party, the Democrats.

Rep. Ce-... and Georgia... Legislature... U.S. No... concentrated... anticipated... six seats... possible... out... with the state... "It looks... represent... per quarter state Re... ing. "The power... Georgia then," he... Rep. Lane, who... legislative and Congressional... mittee, said state House... headcount of 45,000 people. He says... will jump to 55,000 with the state's higher population.

"Even though we're growing on the (Georgia) coast," said Lane, "our rate of growth is less proportionately to the rest of the state."

Despite ongoing growth in the Golden Isles (Jekyll

... We want to dis... for the community in a posi... anyone doesn't agree."

Perhaps Waycross and Ware County could learn a lesson or two from their Alma neighbors? We simply must get it together if we are to grow and prosper as a community.

Some Democrats, however, feel Obama has overlearned the lessons of 1993 and is bending over too far to attract GOP support in the Senate. Unless he and congressional Democratic leaders agree to strengthen the public insurance provision later in the legislative process, they say, he may regret his hands-off approach.

"No one in this building wants health care reform as much as we do," California Democratic Rep. Lynn Woolsey, co-chair of the Congressional Progressive Caucus, told reporters in the Capitol this week. However, she said, if a bill "does not include a real and robust public option that lives up to our criteria, then we will fight it with everything that we have."

The legislative focus is on the 100-member Senate, where the rules make it difficult to pass contested bills without 60 votes; there are 57 Democrats, plus two independents who usually vote with Democrats. The House is moving a Democratic-crafted bill virtually certain to include a publicly run health insurance provider with the clout to compete with private insurers.

In the Senate, Finance Committee Chairman Max Baucus, D-Mont., is determined to win some Republican support for a far-reaching health care bill, which eventually must be reconciled with the House version to become law. GOP members oppose a public option similar to the House's plan, saying it would have unfair advantages that would drive private insurers out of business.

Many Democrats dispute that claim, but Baucus is leaning toward a compromise version involving nonprofit cooperatives. Critics say co-ops would not be genuine public options for health insurance.

Proposed by Sen. Kent Conrad, D-N.D., the co-ops would receive federal startup money, but then would operate independently of the government. They would have to maintain the same financial reserves that private companies are required to keep in case of unexpectedly high claims.

Frustrated liberal activists, however, point to polls showing strong public support for a government-run option that is more robust than the one apparently favored by the Senate Finance Committee. They ask why Democrats, who control the House, Senate and White House, are pushing a version backed by many Republicans.

White House aides say Obama wants to avoid issuing nonnegotiable demands early in the legislative process. He feels Clinton made such a mistake in a failed 1993 bid to revamp the health care system. Obama has made clear that he supports a bona fide public option for health insurance, which critics say is missing from the Senate Finance package, at least for now.

But Obama "wants comprehensive health reform even more," said former Sen. Tom Daschle, who has advised the administration on health care. "He will do all he can to get a public option," Daschle said, "but at the end of the day, the only thing nonnegotiable is success."

... he is able to reconcile with his wife. The Palmetto Family Council, an important local social conservative organization, issued a statement saying Sanford "told the truth with apparent contrition — and contrition is a start."

That might satisfy some Sanford supporters. But when it comes to the serious business of state government, it's not nearly enough.



Sanford's Affair Boogie Nights In Argentina

By BYRON YORK

Newspaper Enterprise Association

When South Carolina Gov. Mark Sanford was missing in action and thought to be hiking the Appalachian Trail, I e-mailed a well-connected political type in the state to ask what was going on.

"All sorts of rumors are flying, from a Susan Boyle sort of meltdown to domestic issues," came the response. "Mostly the latter, or maybe a combination. Much talk of a girlfriend in the mix."

Later events proved the rumors right. But even after the governor's many revealing and unscripted statements, and his decision not to resign, several important questions remain.

The most serious is whether Sanford is in a frame of mind — is in fact able — to carry out his duties as governor. His passionate love affair with an Argentine woman, Maria Belen Chapur, appears to be a classic case of a middle-aged man who wants out of his life.

"I don't hate my job," Sanford told Gina Smith, the reporter who caught him at the Atlanta airport on his return from Argentina. But Smith, writing in *The State*, South Carolina's most influential newspaper, says Sanford told her he was "close to hating it."

So if the governor is "close" to hating his job, is there anything about confessing the affair that would make his responsibilities any less onerous? Or is he right back where he was before he headed to South America?

A second question is why Sanford traveled to Argentina in the first place. Did he go to break up with the woman or — well, who knows? It seems obvious that Sanford was in an escapist mood — not a good thing for a man with constitutional responsibilities — and he seemed to be running away from life in the state capital.

A third question is whether Sanford had any intention of revealing the affair to the public. At the airport, Smith asked Sanford whether he had been alone in Argentina. "Yes," Sanford answered. Then, according to Smith, Sanford "cut me off, saying he could see where the interview was going and he did not want to discuss the situation further."

"I always will wonder if the story would have broken if I had failed to catch him in the airport," Smith concluded. It's possible Sanford was coming home under the delusion that he could keep the affair secret.

It was only after *The State* got in touch with the governor's office, saying it had those incriminating e-mails between Sanford and the Argentine woman, that Sanford scheduled a news conference and confessed. In that news conference, San-

'A number of social conservatives have said that Sanford's survival in South Carolina depends on whether he is able to reconcile with his wife.'



Sanford

— Byron York

ford was asked whether he had been alone in Argentina. "Obviously not," he answered.

A fourth question concerns Sanford's emotional state. Other politicians caught messing around have stressed how little their affairs meant to them. Sanford, by contrast, appears to be a man still deeply, if unhappily, in love. "What's so different about this, as opposed to (John) Edwards and (John) Ensign and (Elliot) Spitzer and all the other philandering politicians, is this was a more serious relationship," one well-connected South Carolina politico told me. "He was in love with her, and still may be."

A fifth question involves the false information put out by the governor's office while he was in Argentina. "There was an evolving set of facts out of the governor's office," another Republican insider told me. "Everything that came out of the office conflicted with something that was previously said." Did Sanford involve his staff in a cover-up? Or did he leave them in the dark for days? Neither scenario looks good.

The final, and perhaps most troubling, question involves Sanford's performance of his duties as governor. Sanford was known as a man who liked to occasionally get away by himself. "What was different this time was he wasn't responding to text messages or cell phone calls," the first insider told me. Will South Carolinians want to keep a governor who believes he can just disappear?

A number of social conservatives have said that Sanford's survival in South Carolina depends on whether he is able to reconcile with his wife. The Palmetto Family Council, an important local social conservative organization, issued a statement saying Sanford "told the truth with apparent contrition — and contrition is a start."

That might satisfy some Sanford supporters. But when it comes to the serious business of state government, it's not nearly enough.

Mike Lester - Rome News Tribune
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