

LETTER TO EDITOR: Silence in action

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Nat Hentoff's Monday Op-Ed column on Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe, "The Hitler of Africa," accurately describes the predicament we face in dealing with Zimbabwe. In comparing Mr. Mugabe's arrogance to Adolf Hitler's, Mr. Hentoff is correct in his assertion that U.S. economic sanctions and "deep regrets" from the United Nations will not promote positive change.

Additionally, it is a sad day when South Africa, the continent's emerging democracy, objects to calling the elections "illegitimate." As the editorials and articles on Mr. Mugabe's tyrannical rule multiply, there is silence from all of his initial supporters in the Carter administration. Leaders such as Randall Robinson of TransAfrica, former Ambassador Andrew Young and former President Jimmy Carter aided in Mr. Mugabe's installation, even though he made clear his goals for a violent one-party state. The National Defense Council Foundation predicted the pattern of unfair elections and hazardous governance as far back as 1980. Now, the Carter Center lamely comments only that it hopes Zimbabwe will "fulfill its commitment to the universal values and principles of democracy and respect for human rights." As long as Mr. Mugabe is in power, this will never happen. The people of Zimbabwe deserve the freedom the Carter administration and TransAfrica set out to accomplish, and it must start with an end to Mr. Mugabe's rule.

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