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***Statement by Ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad, U.S. Permanent Representative, on Zimbabwe, in the Security Council, July 11, 2008***

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The United States is disappointed that the Russian Federation and China today prevented the Security Council from adopting a strong resolution condemning and sanctioning the violent regime of Robert Mugabe.

China and Russia have stood with Mugabe against the people of Zimbabwe. More than a majority of the Security Council members stood with the people of Zimbabwe by demanding that Mugabe put an end, an immediate end, to the violence and the start of serious negotiations with the opposition.

The draft resolution would have supported the courageous efforts of the Zimbabwean people to change their lives peacefully through democratic elections.

Unfortunately, the Russian Federation and China blocked the adoption of this draft resolution for reasons that we think are not borne out by the facts on the ground.

The U-turn in the Russian position is particularly surprising and disturbing. Only a few days ago the Russian Federation was supportive of a G8 statement which said, and I quote, "We express grave concern about the situation in Zimbabwe. We deplore the fact that the Zimbabwean authorities pressed ahead with the presidential election despite the absence of appropriate conditions for free and fair voting as a result of their systematic violence, obstruction and intimidation. We recommend the appointment of a special envoy of the UN Secretary-General to report on the political, humanitarian, human rights and security situation and to support regional efforts to take forward mediation between political parties. We will take further steps, inter alia introducing financial and other measures against those individuals responsible for violence."

The Russian performance here today raises questions about its reliability as a G8 partner.

There should be no doubt that what is happening in Zimbabwe affects peace and security in the region. UN Deputy Secretary-General Migiro called the situation in Zimbabwe the "single greatest challenge to regional stability in southern Africa." The African Union adopted a resolution expressing its concern about the "urgent need to prevent further worsening of the situation and with a view to avoid the spread of conflict with the consequential negative impact on the country and the sub-region."

Three African states—Liberia, Sierra Leone and Burkina Faso—co-sponsored this resolution. In the case of Liberia and Sierra Leone, whose democratic governments emerged, after years of conflict, with the help of the UN and the Security Council, they joined in co-sponsoring the draft resolution as an indication of their concern about the impact of the situation in Zimbabwe on the region. We applaud

their courage in standing up for the people of Zimbabwe.

Further, there are no serious, substantive negotiations underway between the Mugabe regime and the opposition contrary to what the representative of South Africa reported. The Mugabe regime and the representatives from the opposition MDC had a preliminary meeting in South Africa the other day, in which the MDC laid down conditions for substantive negotiations, but they are not yet underway.

Finally, this draft resolution would have supported regional and international mediation efforts, not to undercut them. This draft resolution would have empowered regional and international mediators by giving Mr. Mugabe an incentive to negotiate seriously.

The surest way for Mr. Mugabe to have avoided this sanctions resolution would have been to have acted immediately to end the violence and start serious negotiations with the opposition. He had a week since our introduction of this draft resolution to act. Unfortunately, during this time, the violence continued, as did Mr. Mugabe's bellicose rhetoric. For example, Mugabe spokesman George Charamba said of those drawing attention to the flaws in the post-March 29 electoral process, "They can go hang. They can go and hang a thousand times." This is an irresponsible response and shows the regime's contempt for the people of Zimbabwe as well as for the international community.

Although this draft resolution was not adopted, we will continue to work with all the Security Council delegations to monitor closely the situation in Zimbabwe and to urge the Secretary General to appoint a Special Representative to support the negotiating process between the political parties in Zimbabwe and to report to the Council on the political, humanitarian, human rights and security situation in Zimbabwe.

Thank you Mr. President.