RHODESIA'S UNILATERAL DECLARATION of INDEPENDENCE
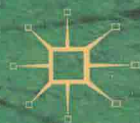
An International History

Carl Peter Watts

RHODESIA'S UNILATERAL DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE

AN INTERNATIONAL HISTORY

Carl Peter Watts

palgrave
macmillan

For my girls, in order of appearance:
Shannon, Annabelle, Sophia, and Ava

Acknowledgments

Contents

INTRODUCTION

THE RHODESIAN CRISIS IN INTERNATIONAL HISTORY AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

On November 11, 1965, the Rhodesian prime minister, Ian Douglas Smith, broadcast a proclamation to the people of Rhodesia that was modeled on the American Declaration of Independence. The proclamation observed that it was an "indisputable and historic fact" that Rhodesia had enjoyed self-government since 1923, claimed that the people of Rhodesia supported their government's request for independence, and lamented that the British government persisted in "maintaining an unwarrantable jurisdiction . . . to the detriment of the future peace, prosperity, and good government of Rhodesia." The proclamation declared the Rhodesian government's belief that "procrastination and delay strike at and injure the very life of the nation," and that it was "essential that Rhodesia should obtain without delay sovereign independence, the justice of which is beyond question." Finally, the proclamation affirmed the "unswerving loyalty" of the Rhodesian people to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, and asserted their "undoubted right . . . to promote the common good so that the dignity and freedom of all men may be assured." Annexed to the proclamation was a new constitution that unilaterally severed British responsibility for Rhodesia's affairs. Smith went on to reiterate the justice of the Rhodesian cause and told the Rhodesian people that they had been cast in a heroic role of "worldwide significance." He concluded, "We have struck a blow for the preservation of justice, civilization, and Christianity—and in the spirit of this belief we have thus assumed our sovereign independence."[1] As Smith delivered his broadcast, the governor of Rhodesia, Sir Humphrey Gibbs, issued a statement to the press in which he announced that in accordance with his instructions from London he had dismissed Smith and his Cabinet from office: "I call on citizens of Rhodesia to refrain from all acts which would further the objectives of the illegal authorities. Subject to that it is the duty of all citizens to maintain law and order in this country and to carry on with their normal tasks. This applies equally to the judiciary, the armed services, the police and public services."[2] However,

the dismissal of the Rhodesian government was not reported to the Rhodesian public because of strict press censorship.

The situation in Rhodesia remained calm, but the Rhodesian government had taken steps to ensure that this would be the case. On November 3, Smith asked Gibbs to sign a proclamation introducing a state of emergency, which was supported by an affidavit from the commissioner of police. Smith assured Gibbs that this was not a prelude to a (Unilateral Declaration of Independence) UDI and the governor was therefore persuaded to sign the proclamation, which was issued two days later.[3] With the domestic situation under control, the Rhodesian government hoped that the international controversy over the UDI would last only a matter of days. Smith recognized that UDI would infuriate "starry-eyed liberals and the frustrated communists," but he placed his faith "in the theory that sudden storms are short."[4] This was a sad delusion; the storm would be anything but short. The situation in Rhodesia was inescapably part of what W. E. B. Du Bois had famously predicted would become "[t]he problem of the twentieth century . . . the problem of the color line."[5] The international indignation aroused by UDI—among the African nationalists in Rhodesia, within the Organization of African Unity, among the members of the Commonwealth, and at the United Nations—combined with the intrusion of the Cold War into African politics meant that the Rhodesian situation remained a festering sore on the international body politic for the next 15 years. A combination of economic sanctions, guerilla warfare, and changing political attitudes toward Rhodesia in the United States and South Africa eventually undermined the capacity of the white minority regime to further resist the transition to black majority rule. As the responsible colonial power, Britain was embarrassingly impotent throughout the UDI period, and was not able to grant legal independence to the state of Zimbabwe until April 1980. This book seeks to examine why Britain, in conjunction with its international partners, was unable to manage the issue of Rhodesian independence more effectively and prevent a UDI from occurring, or to bring a swift end to the crisis as it unfolded.

THE RHODESIAN CRISIS:
HISTORIOGRAPHY AND SOURCES

During the 1960s, the disintegration of the Central African Federation and the concomitant problems of granting independence to Southern Rhodesia attracted a significant amount of coverage in the British media and a high degree of interest among academics. The level of scrutiny intensified in the wake of Rhodesia's UDI. Many books were published that examined the events leading up to UDI and subsequent efforts to bring Rhodesia back to legality through diplomatic negotiations and economic sanctions. With the escalation of the armed confrontation between African nationalists and the UDI regime, a number of books also appeared about the guerilla war. After Rhodesia eventually became legally independent as Zimbabwe in 1980, a couple of studies of the Lancaster House

negotiations emerged and a few other books on Rhodesia's independence were published, then interest generally subsided for almost twenty years.[6] However, during the last decade or so, a combination of media attention, fresh archival material, new oral histories, ongoing archival cataloguing and digitization projects, periodic academic conferences, and a flurry of publications, has revealed a resurgent interest in the Rhodesian crisis and the recent history of southern Africa.

Media reports about Ian Smith's activities a few years before his death, and accounts of the troubled rule of Robert Mugabe in present day Zimbabwe, have contributed to a renewed focus on the country's history and contemporary politics.[7] In a debate at the Oxford Union in October 2000, Smith refused to apologize for atrocities committed while he held office. He said he had no regrets about the estimated 30,000 Zimbabweans killed during the period of Rhodesian Front rule. On the contrary, Smith suggested, "The more we killed, the happier we were. We were fighting terrorists."[8] Professor Welshman Ncube, then shadow Home Affairs Minister for the Movement for Democratic Change in Zimbabwe, was astounded that Smith "could actually today stand up and feel no remorse, no contrition, find nothing wrong in the system he defended."[9] When Smith died in November 2007, some commentators noted that many people who remembered the Rhodesian crisis would remain sympathetic to Smith because he had been correct in his prediction that the Mugabe regime would become just as dystopian as so many other African states. However, such assessments neglected the fact that Smith's ruthless defense of UDI left a legacy of bitterness that ultimately made Mugabe's rule possible.[10] One writer even asserted that "those black Zimbabweans who lived through the Smith years would still prefer Mugabe, despite the current brutalities inflicted upon them."[11] This is a bold and controversial claim, but it does serve to underscore the continuing significance of the UDI period for Zimbabweans.[12]

Research on the Rhodesian crisis has been assisted by the vast numbers of public and private records that have been released during the last 15 years in Britain, Zimbabwe, South Africa, the United States, Australia, Canada, and New Zealand.[13] These records have been supplemented by several oral history projects that have captured the story of Rhodesia's painful journey toward independence in the words of the people who lived through it. In 1999, David Dimbleby presented a BBC documentary series titled *Rebellion!*, which featured interviews with many of the surviving protagonists.[14] In September 2000, the Institute for Contemporary British History (ICBH) organized a Witness Seminar on UDI, held at The National Archives, Kew, United Kingdom.[15] This was followed by a further Witness Seminar on the Lancaster House settlement organized by the ICBH and the Cold War Studies Centre at the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE), which was again held at The National Archives, in July 2005.[16]

Archival cataloguing and digitization projects have also facilitated the study of UDI. For example, the Rhodesian Army Archive is a major research collection deposited at the British Empire and Commonwealth Museum in

London.[17] Cataloging of that collection has facilitated an oral history project about the Rhodesian security forces who served during the guerilla war of the 1960s and 1970s.[18] Other highly significant developments include the Aluka Project's Struggles for Freedom in Southern Africa Collection, and the Nordic Africa Institute's Documentation Project on the Liberation Struggles in Southern Africa, which have greatly assisted scholars examining the UDI period from the perspective of African nationalists.[19]

The availability of this abundant and rich material has generated a great upsurge in scholarship, which was evident in two academic conferences that marked the fortieth anniversary of UDI in November 2005. In September 2005, the Centre for Research in the Arts, Social Sciences and Humanities, Cambridge, organized a conference titled "UDI Forty Years On: Liberation, Confrontation and Cooperation," which was opened by Kenneth Kaunda, former president of Zambia (1964–91).[20] In January 2006, a similar conference was held in the Cold War Studies Centre at the LSE, which was opened by Lord Owen, who was involved in the Rhodesian crisis as Parliamentary Undersecretary of State for the Navy (1968–70), and later as Foreign Secretary (1977–79).[21] Those conference proceedings generated an edited collection of essays on southern Africa in the Cold War that was wide-ranging in its chronological and geographical scope but did not deal comprehensively with UDI.[22]

The last decade has seen significant research output on the Rhodesian crisis, with the completion of several doctoral theses and an increasing number of specialist journal articles on various aspects of UDI.[23] Many useful books have also been published, although none purport to be an international history of UDI. Scholars of British policymaking have been well served by the *British Documents on the End of Empire Project*, which has made available a wide selection of documents on the Rhodesian crisis.[24] There have been several recent studies of Harold Wilson's government that deal in whole or in part with international policy, including Rhodesia, and these books have made an important contribution to the debate on Labour's performance in office during the period 1964–70.[25] In terms of autobiography and biography, historians of Rhodesia during the UDI period have had the benefit of Ian Smith's vituperative memoirs,[26] and Alan Megahey's study of the "beleaguered" governor of Southern Rhodesia, Sir Humphrey Gibbs.[27] No books have been written recently on the Commonwealth and the United Nations aspects of the Rhodesian crisis, but there have been some excellent studies of the United States' involvement.[28] Richard Wood has furnished the scholarly community with what is undoubtedly the lengthiest account of Rhodesia's attempts to obtain independence, which is based on the papers of Ian Smith as well as British public records.[29] However, Wood's chronological narrative is heavy on detail and does not effectively separate the various international strands of the Rhodesian crisis. A key task of this book is therefore to provide a clearly structured international history of the period leading up to UDI.

ARGUMENTS AND SCOPE OF THE BOOK

Historians have tended to view UDI as the inevitable outcome of an intractable political problem. Robert Holland, for example, has commented that "Anglo-Rhodesian talks were really concerned with the cultivation of images for media presentation, since the two sides were too far apart for a real agreement to be practicable."[30] This view is supported to some extent by the fact that a feeling of inevitability pervades the documentary record for many months before Rhodesia actually declared its independence.[31] More recent oral history records have also tended to confirm the contemporary impression that a UDI could not be avoided, and that it was really a question of when, rather than if, it would occur.[32] It is a common observation that historians can become captives of their documentary evidence, which often leads them "to conclude that what was done was the only thing that could have been done."[33] It is a central contention of this book, however, that although the problem of Rhodesian independence was highly complex, a UDI was by no means inevitable. The documentary record does suggest that there were courses of action that were dismissed or remained underexplored—not only in Britain but also in the Commonwealth and the United States—which could have been pursued further and may have prevented a UDI. This book will also demonstrate that there were structural weaknesses in the machinery of government of each of the major actors, particularly in Britain. This made the management of the Rhodesian crisis more difficult, contributed to the likelihood of a UDI, and exacerbated tension in relations between Britain and its international partners.

Chapter 1 explains briefly the collapse of the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland—also known as the Central African Federation (CAF)—and the emergence of the Rhodesian independence problem. However, the main purpose of the chapter is to survey the negotiations between the British and Rhodesian governments in the year preceding UDI. The chapter observes the dominant role that Harold Wilson played in the shaping of British policy and in the conduct of negotiations, but suggests that the focus of the negotiations was misplaced. Although British ministers and officials did remarkably well to keep the Rhodesians talking for so long, they expended an enormous amount of effort trying to reach agreement on constitutional arrangements that were acceptable to the British government, the Rhodesian government, the African nationalists in Rhodesia, and the wider international community. It would have been more realistic to try to maintain the status quo for a few years, during which time the transition to African majority rule could have been planned. Such an arrangement might have been acceptable if the British government had been prepared to offer a massive program of aid and technical assistance, which would have engaged the Rhodesian government's key concern about economic uncertainty, and facilitated the education and training of Africans for future majority rule. Literature on negotiation theory is used in this chapter to analyze and evaluate the conduct of Anglo-Rhodesian negotiations.

Chapter 2 uses correspondence from former members of the Rhodesian security services, recent oral testimony from British politicians and civil servants, and documentary evidence from archives around the world to reexamine the viability of British military intervention in Rhodesia during 1964 and 1965. The chapter argues that the military and political obstacles to the use of force cited at the time and since have been grossly exaggerated. This chapter demonstrates that with sufficient resolve, the British government could have used force to prevent or end UDI. This would have offered an effective solution to one of the most protracted and embarrassing international problems that confronted successive British governments during disengagement from Empire. The chapter situates the arguments on the use of force in relation to theoretical analyses of deterrence and coercive diplomacy.

The British government's decision to abjure the use of force exposed it to profound criticism within the Commonwealth. Wilson and the right wing of the Labour Party had hoped that the Commonwealth would continue to serve as a vehicle for British economic and strategic interests, but these hopes foundered on the sharp rocks of the Rhodesian problem, which threatened to tear the Commonwealth apart. Chapter 3 examines why, despite widespread fears that it would not survive, the Commonwealth did not disintegrate during the Prime Ministers' Meetings held between 1964 and 1966. The chapter argues that a combination of British diplomatic dexterity, support from the Old Commonwealth, and political divisions among the African Commonwealth states in particular allowed the Commonwealth to survive relatively unscathed. Chapter 3 also discusses the founding of the Commonwealth Secretariat, whose immediate origins are to be found in the context of the 1964 and 1965 Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Meeting. The chapter shows that the Rhodesian crisis quickly exposed tension between radical and conservative views about the proper functions of the Secretariat, but it also acknowledges the long-term implications of the Secretariat for the organizational character of the Commonwealth.

Chapter 4 extends the discussion of the Commonwealth dimension. It demonstrates that Canada developed a particularly proactive approach toward the Rhodesian problem but Britain, Australia, and New Zealand gave only limited encouragement to Canadian initiatives. This chapter also explains how the conventions of Commonwealth diplomatic representation made the problem more difficult to manage. By the mid-1960s the arrangements for intra-Commonwealth representation between its sovereign member states were well established. The exclusion of Rhodesia from the Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference ruled out the possibility of multilateral diplomatic engagement. Opportunities to influence the Rhodesian government were therefore restricted to bilateral exchanges, but the mechanisms for such diplomatic representation, though technically correct, were limited and inadequate. This chapter uses representation theory to confirm the necessity for sufficient bilateral exchanges between sovereign states and other international actors but demonstrates that the parties to such a diplomatic relationship can conceive the functions of representation in different terms.

Chapter 5 explores Anglo-American consultation and cooperation during the period leading up to UDI. The chapter considers the formulation of US contingency plans to deal with the eventuality of a UDI, and US efforts to provide diplomatic support for Britain in its attempts to prevent a UDI. It is argued that on both issues there was considerable misperception and miscommunication between Washington and London, which caused disappointment and even suspicion at senior levels of government on both sides. This chapter explains the misunderstandings and frustrations in Anglo-American relations by using some theoretical perspectives on alliance politics and thereby makes a useful contribution to the literature on the "special relationship" during the Wilson-Johnson era.

Chapter 6 examines support for Britain in the United Nations during the Rhodesian crisis. Britain relied heavily on its Old Commonwealth partners and the United States to prevent the Rhodesian crisis from slipping out of its control in the UN General Assembly and the Security Council, but this gave rise to certain anomalies. For example, Canada and New Zealand saw the United Nations as a cornerstone of their external relations, but they were placed in the invidious position of supporting the British claim that Rhodesia did not fall within the United Nations' sphere of competence. The United States also found itself—not for the first, or the last time—supporting British colonial policy despite America's supposedly anti-imperial heritage. The situation offered opportunities for China and the Soviet Union to exploit anger among Afro-Asian nations who perceived racism in British policy. Britain and its supporters feared the possibility of a "Red Army in blue berets" in southern Africa, but economic concerns were also highly significant. A Chapter VII resolution imposing mandatory sanctions against Rhodesia would have created a precedent that could have been used to bring similar measures against South Africa. This would have had more profound effects on Western economic interests than sanctions against Rhodesia. This chapter therefore examines both the strategic and economic foundations of cooperation between Britain and its supporters at the United Nations during the Rhodesian crisis. The chapter includes a theoretical consideration of the nature of international crisis and explains why Rhodesia's UDI can be conceptualized in such terms.

METHODOLOGY

This book is first and foremost an international history, which seeks to illuminate the Rhodesian crisis from the perspectives of Britain, the Commonwealth (especially the Old Commonwealth), the United States, and the United Nations. However, in the last two decades the field of International History has come to mean something very different from the state-centered approach of this book. The "cultural turn"—which has been driven mainly, but certainly not exclusively, by American historians—has greatly affected the pattern of scholarship on international history. The trend began with analyses of the way in which states used culture as a policy tool in the ideological

context of the Cold War. A range of new approaches has proliferated, such as those based on race, gender, "collective memory," and identity, which has transformed the field of inquiry.[34] Historians have also seized on the concepts of globalization and transnationalism in order to address themes such as diasporas, migration, disease, the environment, human rights, and terrorism.[35] The significance of these developments is evident in the response of the Society for Historians of American Foreign Relations (SHAFR), which has sought to remain relevant by reaching out beyond its original constituency of diplomatic historians. SHAFR has encouraged closer association with professional bodies such as the American Studies Association and Organization of American Historians, whose members pursue scholarship on cultural and transnational history, and the SHAFR journal, *Diplomatic History*, regularly publishes articles on these themes.[36] Cultural approaches have also become dominant in the "new imperial history," whose adherents emphasize the mutual interplay of cultural influences between metropolitan and colonial societies, and the continuing effects of this even after decolonization.[37] It is undoubtedly true that the "cultural turn" has enhanced understanding in the fields of international and imperial history and it is certainly no longer the case that practitioners of international history are characterized by the reactionary conservatism lamented even a decade ago.[38] Younger scholars especially have been quick to embrace cultural approaches, lest they be considered "old-fashioned" or "retrograde."[39] However, as Frederick Cooper has suggested, the bandwagon effect has produced a "conformism of the avant-garde," which militates against other approaches.[40] One would hope that a more traditional international history of the type found in this book can still find acceptance, first because "it is the diversity of approach in our profession that helps to make the discussion of controversial historical issues exciting and productive."[41] Second, a state-centered approach is clearly relevant when discussing issues such as the collapse of a federation, the negotiation of constitutional arrangements under which a colony may become independent, the possible use of force to achieve a policy objective, inadequacies in the arrangements for diplomatic representation, structural problems in the relationship between allies, or the utility of economic sanctions to coerce a rogue state. This is certainly not to say that a state-centric approach is the only way to write about the Rhodesian crisis; it is merely that the themes selected for investigation in this book are concerned with the interaction between states.

Although the book is traditional in its focus on the diplomatic relationship between states, it is more novel in its interdisciplinary methods, as it uses multiple theoretical perspectives from International Relations (IR) to frame different aspects of the empirical research. Many theoretically oriented works tend to test and illustrate a single theory by using multiple comparative case studies or by adopting an in-depth case study approach. For example, the International Crisis Behavior (ICB) Project, established in 1975, adopted both qualitative and quantitative methods to investigate the nature of international crisis, consisting of "in-depth studies of perceptions and decisions

by a single state; and studies in breadth of the 412 crises that plagued the international system from the end of World War I."[42] The ICB Project classified Rhodesia as a "protracted conflict," consisting of 11 international crises during the period 1965–80. In a very detailed case study, Douglas Anglin used the ICB Project's model of international crisis to analyze the nature of Zambian decision making during 1965–66.[43] By contrast, academic studies that apply more than one theoretical perspective to the same case study are relatively uncommon. The classic example, written by the political scientist Graham Allison, is *Essence of Decision*, which was first published four decades ago. Allison explored US decision making during the Cuban missile crisis from three perspectives that explain foreign policy outcomes differently: the Rational Actor Model, the Organizational Process Model, and the Governmental Politics Model.[44] A more recent example of multiperspectivism is Roger Pfister's *Apartheid South Africa and African States*, which uses theories from political science and IR to explain the formulation of South African foreign policy and the interaction between South Africa and other states in sub-Saharan Africa.[45] The methodological approach in this book is similar; it is intended to illustrate how the different facets of a historical case study can be analyzed using a variety of theories, such as those on negotiation, deterrence, coercive diplomacy, and alliance theory.

It has been suggested that the relationship between the fields of International History (IH) and IR has been "ambiguous, indeed at times downright hostile." But during the last 15 years, there has been "a thawing between the two fields."[46] Thomas Smith has explained the perception of the acrimonious relationship through a familiar metaphor: "Perhaps because it is a child of history, International Relations, as it developed, has tried to distance itself from historical discourse, through methodological and theoretical innovations seeking general knowledge about international and global politics."[47] It is commonly observed that in the 1960s a transatlantic divide became established between the historically informed English school of IR scholars and the ahistorical community of American IR theorists that was increasingly turning to quantitative methods. Writing in 1972, Hedley Bull, one of the leading academics of the English school, lamented what he called the "long, dark winter of the 'social scientific' ascendancy."[48] Two decades later it seemed that the separation between theorists and empiricists was no less pronounced, as evidenced by the controversies over Francis Fukuyama's "end of history" thesis and Samuel Huntington's theory of the "clash of civilizations."[49] In fact, the perception of a division between ahistorical American IR theorists and atheoretical British international historians has been somewhat exaggerated. John Hobson and George Lawson have recently commented that "history never really went away as a tool of IR theory" even among neorealist scholars who are renowned for their static world view.[50] It has also been suggested that IR theorists have become more interested in historical narrative "not as an adjunct or empirical resource, but as a theoretical perspective in its own right."[51] Neither is it true that the craft of the historian is inherently devoid of theory. Although historians pursue narrative-based

explanations aiming for accuracy and descriptive completeness, they nevertheless seek to ascribe primacy to different categories of causes and consequences, thereby using theory implicitly.[52] Perhaps the crucial difference is that "[w]hereas political scientists (standing aloof from the material they propose to organize) theorise first and then illustrate the theory, historians usually plunge in, then try to explain where they are, what is going on, and how they might explain what they have seen."[53]

The divide between IH and IR has also been overstated in other ways. It is not particularly helpful, for example, to distinguish between history and political science by comparing the complexity of historical explanations with the parsimonious preferences of political science. Historians certainly do recognize the complexity of events and processes but they nevertheless emphasize causal or consequential primacy, which places them not too distant from the political scientists' emphasis on key "independent variables."[54] Jack Levy has contended that what best reflects the distinction between history and political science is the idiographic approach of the former compared to the nomothetic aims of the latter. In other words, historians are usually concerned with explaining particular events, whereas political scientists try to generalize about classes of events.[55] Historians usually examine single cases in great depth, whereas political scientists mostly use clusters or sequences of examples, known as "data sets," which tend to be largely devoid of detail. Edward Ingram has commented on this difference between the two disciplines: "The historian's single example may be more representative than the political scientist's cluster. It is researched more deeply and comprehensively and set in a broader context. It implies a theory and tries to advance its development, perhaps by refinement, perhaps by revisionism; it continues a discussion instead of claiming to be a proof. Nor are historians persuaded that a cluster of lightly researched, detached—at best semidetached—cases, often written up by different scholars, is likely to advance the argument any better."[56]

However, this distinction should not be pushed too far because historians do not always write single case studies; they often adopt a comparative approach or test hypotheses against a range of cases.[57] Neither is it uniformly true that political scientists base their findings on evidence that lacks sufficient depth. Douglas Anglin's *Zambian Crisis Behaviour*, which is one of the ICB Project's qualitative studies mentioned previously, runs to 254 pages excluding notes and appendices, and cannot be said to be "lightly researched."[58]

Two further bases on which history is sometimes distinguished from political science are predictive capacity and policy relevance. Since historians are first and foremost concerned with explaining the past, they usually decline to make predictions, whereas political scientists are inclined to believe that their theories have predictive utility.[59] However, the confidence of political scientists was severely dented by their failure to predict an end to the Cold War, which raised questions about the utility of political science for understanding a phenomenon that dominated global politics for almost five decades.[60] Unlike IR, the field of International History does not claim to be explicitly policy relevant. IR theorists tend to focus on the recent history that is most relevant to the present concerns of policymakers, whereas

international historians concern themselves with "deep" history, for which archival evidence is more abundant. Yet once again, this distinction should not be pushed too far. Historians are interested in the past for its own sake, but they often highlight the relevance of their work for understanding current problems and for making IR theory more useful.[61]

If the differences between IH and IR have been exaggerated, then it is also true that the common ground between the two disciplines has been understated. International historians and IR theorists share a fundamental common interest in subject matter—that is, diplomacy, crisis, and war.[62] Alexander George has suggested that a cross-disciplinary approach is essential for dealing with questions such as why policymakers make particular decisions, how states interact with each other, and how the "lessons of history" can be correctly learned and applied.[63] With regard to the possible use of force against Rhodesia, Westminster and Whitehall were all too aware of the lessons of Suez, as discussed in Chapter 2.[64] A further element of common ground between international historians and IR theorists is that they share a positivist methodology, in which empirical evidence is required to support analysis, whereas in other fields of historical inquiry, "the relationship between argument and data has become increasingly attenuated."[65] Nevertheless, IH and IR are not exempt from the impact of postmodernist perspectives on textual evidence. As David Reynolds has observed, scholars must be sensitive to language, and this applies not only to evaluative terms such as "special relationship" but also to key concepts used by politicians and diplomats, such as "interests" or "values."[66] The Rhodesian crisis provides a useful illustration of these linguistic concerns. The term *rebellion* is often used in connection with UDI, but the technical meaning of that term is not usually explored. It has been argued that the British government referred to UDI as a rebellion in order to associate the Rhodesian government with treason, but it is not clear that UDI was legally an act of treason.[67]

It is possible to anticipate two methodological criticisms in a book of this type. Traditional diplomatic historians might suggest that attempts to construct explanations by using IR theory are not necessary; the narrative is itself a sufficient method of explanation. In response to this, it may be argued that theory can be very useful for historians, especially when examining a multifaceted historical problem like the Rhodesian crisis. As Marc Trachtenberg has suggested, it is not a case of buying into the "worldview of the theorist" but rather using theory to understand the significance of certain findings in the evidence.[68] IR theorists, on the other hand, may find that the theoretical content of the book is too limited and does not advance any new perspectives. However, there is a difference between using theory and theorizing, which is an important distinction.[69] This book is not intended to offer any new theories, but it is hoped that IR theorists may find some utility in the empirical material that has been used to illustrate several theoretical perspectives.