

Coup Against Mbeki Opens South Africa to Destabilization

by Douglas DeGroot

The Sept. 20 intraparty coup that led the National Executive Committee of the ruling African National Congress (ANC) to call for the removal of South African President Thabo Mbeki from office, was carried out by London-directed opponents of his Presidency, in the interests of expanding the London financial cartel's control over all of Africa. Mbeki's resignation the following day threatens to plunge South Africa into an extended political brawl, destabilizing it for the approximately six-month period leading to the next Presidential election, and beyond. The election is to take place between April and June 2009. It will also give the City of London a freer hand in the rest of Africa.

The absence of Mbeki, considered to be the architect of modern South Africa, will be felt over the entire continent.

On Sept. 23, two days after his ouster, the political crisis in South Africa worsened, when a third of the Cabinet—11 ministers and 3 deputy ministers—rebuffed ANC president Jacob Zuma, London's point man against Mbeki, and resigned their posts. This left Zuma pleading with South Africans: "Don't panic." The day before, Zuma had asked all Cabinet members to retain their posts in the interests of a smooth transition. In South Africa, the resignations were widely viewed as disastrous for the stability of the country. On news of the resignations, the South African rand immediately dropped 2.5% against the dollar and the Johannesburg stock exchange fell by about 4%.

The timing of the operation to dump Mbeki was not

the result of a local internal South African political struggle that just happened to well up spontaneously at this particular time. The conflict was between Mbeki's faction in the ANC, and a leftist grouping, long managed by London, which, in 2005, was put under the nominal control of Zuma, a populist. Using Zuma's populism, the London cartel has been able to build up the left into a formidable political machine by taking advantage of the high unemployment and worsening poverty. These two forces have brutally attacked each other, and the force around the figurehead of Zuma, organized by the left, has been able to weaken Mbeki internally. With his fall from power, he no longer represents a strategic, Africa-wide threat to London. Zuma's defeat of Mbeki last December at Polokwane, for the presidency of the ANC, was the beginning of the end for Mbeki.

The trigger for the sudden escalation against Mbeki was a statement by a George Soros-connected South African high court judge, Chris Nicholson, on Sept. 12 (see box). He threw out a corruption case against Zuma because of an error by the prosecution, concerning the technicality of whether Zuma had been given a chance to give his side of the story before fraud and corruption charges were levied against him again in 2007. It was found that he was not given that chance, and therefore, the charges had to be dropped. Since Nicholson did not rule on the Zuma's guilt or innocence, Zuma could be recharged.

However, Nicholson went far beyond that, and in



UN/Eskinder Debebe

South African President Thabo Mbeki addresses the UN Security Council, April 16, 2008. As the head of Africa's most industrialized country, and an outspoken proponent of the sovereignty of African nations, he was ousted by a British-backed coup plot.

his ruling, endorsed defendant Zuma's theory that there had been political meddling by Mbeki and the government in the case. Nicholson's speculation that Mbeki may have been behind a political plot against Zuma, was used to set off the rapid attack by the now dominant anti-Mbeki crowd in the ANC. Nicholson's allegations were not the result of any court case against the government, or Mbeki. If the ANC thought there was a litigable offense on this issue, the ANC could have lodged a complaint with the Parliament, and there could then have been an investigation as to whether Mbeki was guilty or innocent, as some in South Africa have suggested.

No Interest in Truth

But there was no interest in getting at the truth in this instance. In his ruling, Nicholson chose to agree with the extraneous material introduced by Zuma, which asserted that Mbeki, and at least one prosecutor, were involved in a conspiracy against Zuma. This kicked the attack against Mbeki into motion. The leading anti-Mbeki figures in the ANC were in attendance when Nicholson read his finding. As soon as it became obvious that the judge had bought Zuma's conspiracy argument, and he had accused Mbeki of using state re-

sources to fight political battles, the anti-Mbeki crowd furiously began sending text messages to mobilize to overthrow Mbeki. Key figures in this mobilization were identified by the South African *Times* as: Blade Nzimande, general secretary of the South African Communist Party (SACP); his fellow leftist and Congress of South African Trade Unions (Cosatu) counterpart Zwelinzima Vavi; ANC treasurer Mathews Phosa; and long-time enemies of Mbeki, Tokyo Sexwale and Cyril Ramaphosa, who have both been made billionaires through Black Empowerment operations.

Nicholson is a former trustee of the Legal Resources Centre of South Africa, which receives funding from Soros's Open Society Foundation. The Centre has also supported a study pushed by the South African environmentalists against the Pebble Bed Modular Reactor, putting it in

London's policy track of opposing high technology, notably nuclear power, for Africa.

One faction is not just going to walk away the winner, since the goal of the manipulators from London is to destabilize the entire country; having built up the leftist faction, London is now effectively accomplishing its goal, by playing them off against each other. The crisis could easily weaken the electoral power of the ANC, which has heretofore dominated electoral politics in South Africa; and South African analysts are predicting that this could eventually lead to a split in the ANC. Such a split would make Soros happy; he is on the record saying that it is undemocratic for a country to have such a large ruling party as the ANC.

Ironically, Zuma, who in all his legal difficulties, has said that the courts are illegitimate, and that the power is with the people, has now relied on a judge's speculation to advance his political goal.

London's Goal in Africa

EIR reported Jan. 11, 2008, after the targeting of Kenya for destabilization, and the effort to turn the Presidential succession in Zimbabwe into a chaotic regime-change scenario, the City of London-based financial cartel intended to go after its primary target,

South Africa, the economic powerhouse of Africa. This demonstrates the strategic nature of the operation against Mbeki.

Mbeki enraged the British empire because of his policy of consistently attacking London's campaigns to reduce all of Africa to a collection of territories instead of sovereign nation-states. In addition to Zimbabwe, he has intervened in Sudan, Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ivory Coast, and Liberia.

In another example of his importance for Africa, Mbeki's intervention at the EU summit on Africa in Lisbon last December, prevented the continent-wide endorsement of the EU free-trade policy that EU Trade Commissioner Peter Mandelson, a close associate of former British Prime Minister Tony Blair, had wanted to ram through.

The dumping of Mbeki comes in the midst of a global economic crisis, and the mass resignation was the last thing the anti-Mbeki crowd needed, just when they had to prove to the shareholders of the financial world that they could maintain stability in South Africa without Mbeki, and keep paying shareholders who hold stock in South Africa's largely extractive economy. The departure of Mbeki could be used by London-connected financial networks to aggravate the destabilization by undermining the economy. A similar thing had happened during the negotiations to end apartheid.

At a point during the negotiations, when the ANC was deemed to be pushing too strongly for greater control of the economy, the diamond firm De Beers, which had been based in South Africa since its founding in the 19th Century, suddenly moved its offices to Switzerland, as a warning not to seriously challenge the London financial cartel.

One of the ministers who has now resigned, Finance Minister Trevor Manuel, is credited with being the architect of South Africa's increasing commitment to shareholder value. Although he (along with some of the others who had resigned) has agreed to resume the post of finance minister under Kgalema Motlanthe, the ANC's choice to replace Mbeki until the election next year, the consternation that followed his resignation underlines how vulnerable South Africa will now be. Motlanthe has been a supporter of Zuma. While trying to keep attracting the foreign capital that flowed in under Manuel, the Motlanthe government will have to come up with quick fixes for poverty and unemployment, as Zuma's populist rhetoric promised would happen.

In this difficult economic situation, South Africa has a new President who has no experience operating at this level (Motlanthe was a minister without portfolio under Mbeki for only a few months). The Cabinet will also have several new members with very little

Judge Triggers Attack On President Mbeki

Judge Chris Nicholson set off the attack on President Mbeki by completely swallowing Jacob Zuma's complaint, that the fraud and other charges that were brought against Zuma by Mbeki and his administration were part of a political move to keep him out of office. Zuma has told this story to anyone who will listen to it, inside and outside of South Africa,

- Paragraph 209 of the ruling states: "The applicant [Zuma] states . . . that after all these [legal] proceedings he and those who wished him to occupy a leadership role in the ANC 'were concerned about the criminal charges being re-launched at all and moreover being launched at a critical time in the po-

litical process.' He goes further and suggests that this was a stratagem to cloak him in the guise of an accused at the critical moments in the political process and so hamper his election as ANC President." Nicholson continues: "There does seem to be merit in that contention. I am therefore not inclined to strike out these allegations."

- In paragraph 216: "I am therefore not convinced that the applicant [Zuma] was incorrect in averring political meddling in his prosecution."

- In Paragraph 220: "There is a distressing pattern in the behaviour which I have set out above indicative of political interference, pressure or influence."

- In Paragraph 238: "As appears from the above findings I am satisfied that political meddling cannot be excluded and I am of the judgment that it existed to a sufficiently egregious degree that it justified inclusion in the papers."

experience at this level. This will be a new team operating in difficult circumstances.

Growth is expected to slow in 2008 because higher interest rates have cut South African consumption. In addition, the collapse of world economic activity because of the crisis of the bankrupt world monetary system will also have a negative impact. Inflation has reached record levels, as a result of rising international costs of food and fuel. Despite the world financial markets' approval of the profits that South Africa's economy has generated for them, since 1996, the increase in salaries has been slower than the rising cost of living, so the leftist backing for the Zuma faction, from British Fabian assets, such as the SACP and Cosatu, will be putting pressure on the government to deliver immediate benefits to the poor, and the 40% of the population that is unemployed. Mbeki was not able to help the poor and unemployed, as he wished, because of the onerous conditions that were part of the agreement that led to the end of apartheid. This is never mentioned by the populists. They will have the same problem, but magnified by the global collapse.

Already the infrastructure projects pushed by Mbeki, as a way of expanding the economy, making it more productive so that ultimately, more of the population would benefit, are being considered for the chopping block. "There may be a rethink of mega projects that have not fulfilled the expectations of the poor," said sociologist Dr. Ashwin Desai of the University of the Witwatersrand, in Johannesburg, according to the *South African Mail & Guardian*, Sept. 23.

The Zuma Faction

Zuma became Deputy President in 1999, the year Mbeki became President. In 2001, Schabir Shaik, Zuma's "financial advisor," was arrested after his brother Chippy was suspended from the Ministry of Defense for involvement in a corrupt arms deal, according to accounts in the South African press. Investigators found that Schabir was involved in corrupt dealings with Zuma. Schabir was brought to trial and convicted on May 30, 2005, for corruption involving payments to Zuma of the equivalent of \$185,000, for soliciting a bribe from the French arms company Thomson-CSF, now Thales, and for writing off more than \$154,000 of Zuma's unpaid debts. Judge Hilary Squires, in his verdict, stated that there was "overwhelming" evidence of a corrupt relationship between Shaik and Zuma. Five appeal judges later found that

Shaik's corrupt relationship with Zuma was in violation of the Constitution.

Zuma, who now has at least 18 children, with several wives and with other women, had at that time been living beyond his means; but Shaik gave him money in exchange for influence that would help him win government contracts. After Shaik was sentenced to 15 years in prison, Mbeki dismissed Zuma as Deputy President.

As a result of his dealings with Shaik, in 2005, Zuma faced a charge of racketeering, a charge of money laundering, 2 charges of corruption, and 12 charges of fraud relating to the government arms deal. After much stalling because of delays resulting from his failure to provide critical evidence, the case was dropped in 2006. He was recharged in December 2007, by the Directorate of Special Operations (DSO), also called the Scorpions. This was a special agency set up by Mbeki to investigate and prosecute organized crime and corruption. He appeared in court Aug. 4, 2008. These were the charges that were thrown out by Judge Nicholson eight days later. Zuma continues to claim that the charges are politically motivated.

Zuma was also charged in late 2005 with the rape of a daughter of a deceased comrade from the anti-apartheid struggle. The woman was a friend of one of his daughters and was HIV positive. He gained notoriety during the trial when he said that, after having unprotected sex with the woman, he took a shower afterwards to "cut the risk of contracting HIV." At the time, Zuma headed the National AIDS Council.

The court dismissed the charges, agreeing with him that the sexual act was consensual. Zuma brought ethnicity to the fore with this trial. His defense was that as a Zulu male, he could tell by how a woman dressed and acted, if she wanted to have sex, and when such was the case, he was obliged to give her what she wanted. The woman who brought the charge has since been granted asylum outside of South Africa.

Tensions Within the ANC

Mbeki has been a longtime target of London. The first effort to pull off a coup against him, was uncovered in 2001. Tokyo Sexwale, Cyril Ramaphosa, and Mathews Phosa were accused of attempting to organize a coup against Mbeki, who became President in 1999; prior to that, he had served as Deputy President under Nelson Mandela, South Africa's first post-apartheid President. Mbeki's efforts to bring charges

against the trio were sidetracked in the name of maintaining party unity.

Mbeki and Zuma, who has been called the Teflon politician of South Africa, could not be more diametrically opposed. This is why Mbeki tried to win a third term as the ANC president, to counterbalance Zuma, who could end up being elected South African President next year, if his unresolved legal problems don't trip him up. The Sept. 20 decision by the ANC's National Executive Committee (NEC) to oust Mbeki was the culmination of a coup planned against Mbeki since no later than last December's 52nd ANC national conference, at Polokwane, in which Mbeki's effort to remain president of the ANC was defeated, and he was replaced by Zuma. This puts Zuma in line to be the ANC's next Presidential candidate. The present anti-Mbeki NEC list, was also voted up at that conference, in which the London-controlled SACP and Cosatu played an extremely active role. Mandela sent a message to the delegates, saying that he was ashamed of the infighting in the movement. Archbishop Desmond Tutu's plea to the delegates not to vote for a person who will embarrass the country, fell on deaf ears.

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The ANC has had such dominance and strength in the country, that its Presidential candidate, who has always been the president of the party, has always won the Presidency, since apartheid ended in 1994. One does not have to be a seasoned political observer to see that Zuma did not think up and coordinate the operation to unseat Mbeki on his own.

A significant number of the 80-member NEC were reportedly being investigated by the Scorpions; as soon as Mbeki lost the ANC presidency in December, the ANC moved to get rid of the Scorpions, in order, it is alleged in South Africa, to protect certain prominent ANC members from corruption charges. The move served to absorb the Scorpions into the South African Police Service. According to the Jan. 21 *Mail & Guardian*, United Democratic Movement leader Bantu Holomisa asked, why is the ANC now so obsessed with this one issue? Holomisa said there were no justifiable reasons for disbanding the Scorpions. "We are not blind to the fact that a disturbing amount of people who now think they control the ANC, and indeed the entire country, have pending cases against them." The 2005 Khampepe Commission found that, within its first three years of operation, the DSO (Scorpions) had been far more effective than the police.

The same *Mail & Guardian* article cited a *Sunday Times* report on the manner in which the NEC was making Mbeki accountable to them. At the first NEC meeting he attended since he was removed from the leadership of the ANC, it was made clear to him that he must regularly attend NEC meetings to account for how the government was implementing ANC policy. "If he is failing to honour that obligation, we have no choice but to dismiss him," one NEC member reportedly said."

According to William Gumede, by 2005, Cosatu and the SACP had decided to form a new party if they couldn't persuade the ANC to move to the left. However, after Zuma was dismissed as Deputy President that year, he joined forces with the the Communist Party and Cosatu. He said they should join him, instead of forming a new party, and then he would be able to turn the ANC to the left.

As a result, the leftist component now controls the mainstream ANC; and the centrists, such as people around Mbeki, are in the minority. So this London-orchestrated deal has ousted London's nemesis, Mbeki, and will now be used to wreck South Africa.

Ramasimong Tsokolibane contributed to this article.