

# South Africa Bucks British Opposition, Goes Nuclear

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July 18—South African President Jacob Zuma and his cabinet are now determined to build new nuclear power plants to generate an additional 9,600 megawatts (9.6 gigawatts) of electric power. South Africa currently has the only nuclear power plant on the African continent—at Koeberg, 20 miles north of Cape Town—which provides 1,800 MW, or about 5% of the country's power. It was commissioned in 1984.

The decision to build more nuclear power plants is historic, both for South Africa and for the continent as a whole, because nuclear power—and soon nuclear fusion power—is the indispensable successor to fossil fuels. It is no coincidence that this decision comes at the moment of the founding of the New Development Bank (NDB) by the BRICS nations—Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa. (All of the BRICS nations have nuclear power, and all are building more plants.) The new bank, which will make credit available to developing countries *on terms favorable to them*, will begin with dedicated capital of only \$50 billion, but it can grow, and nations not members of BRICS can join the bank (see articles in this section). The two developments taken together—South Africa's decision for more nuclear power and the BRICS decision to establish the NDB—open up a new vista for Africa.



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*President Jacob Zuma said the founding of the New Development Bank was an “historic and seminal moment.”*

## The New Development Bank

President Zuma told the BRICS Summit plenary session, in Fortaleza, Brazil, July 15, that the founding of the new bank was a “historic and seminal moment.” Finance Minister Nhlanhla Musa Nene told the press just hours after his return from Brazil, that it was the “most exciting development in global development finance since the meetings in Bretton Woods ... some 70 years ago.” He was referring to the founding of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) in 1944. That, too, was an exciting time. But when U.S. President Franklin Delano Roosevelt died nine months after the Bretton Woods meeting, the World Bank and IMF came under the control of the private bankers. The New Development Bank is, therefore, long overdue. Indeed, the rigorous theory for a

new bank, together with exemplary applications, was first published by Lyndon LaRouche as *How the International Development Bank Will Work* in 1975, and circulated to governments, policy makers, and scholars worldwide.

At the BRICS Summit, the South African team—including prominently Trade and Industry Minister Rob Davies—made a strong case for putting the headquarters of the new bank in South Africa, pointing to the urgent development needs of the African continent and South Africa's qualifications to host the new financial institution. The decision was to put the headquarters in Shanghai, but also to create an Africa Regional Center in Johannesburg. South Africa had already been tasked with coordinating Africa's interaction with BRICS.

## South Africa's Nuclear Decision

After a protracted factional attempt to derail South Africa from its nuclear path, President Zuma announced, in his State of the Nation address on June 17, that his government will indeed build new nuclear power plants. He also reiterated seemingly obligatory commitments to wind, solar, and shale fracking.

Nuclear power will not solve all of South Africa's many problems, but without it, they cannot be solved. The decision brings with it enormous hope for the potential nuclearization of the entire African continent. In Africa, South Africa alone has a full-set economy, which could serve to drive development further north. Half of Africa's 1 billion people have no access to electricity. More than half of sub-Saharan Africa's electricity is generated and used in South Africa.

Conventional nuclear power is the bridge to the next step in advancing the density of the world economy's energy-flux, namely nuclear fusion power, in which atomic nuclei are fused rather than split, without producing radioactive waste.

The government plans to take control of the full nuclear fuel cycle, largely through the existing South African Nuclear Energy Corporation. Eskom, the state electricity utility, will retain a majority stake in all nuclear-power-generating entities.

South Africa has 5.5% of the world's known recoverable uranium deposits, and its neighbor Namibia has 5%. South Africa has been separating uranium from its gold (and copper) ores since commissioning a plant for that purpose in 1952 at the behest of the U.S. Atomic Energy Commission.

The model for the project involves full financing from an international partner such as Russia or China. The partner will also build and initially operate the plants, using South African components as much as possible, and training South Africans to master the necessary technical skills. Nothing so far has been said publicly about the NDB taking on a role in the financing, but it is conceivable.

Each of three sites will host two new nuclear reac-



*Finance Minister Nhlanhla Nene: The BRICS Summit was the "most exciting development in global development finance since Bretton Woods..."*

tors. Because South Africa has little freshwater, all three sites will be coastal, so that ocean water can be used as coolant. It is likely that one site will be at Duynefontein, near the existing nuclear power plant. Another, also in the Western Cape, may be at Bantamsklip, near Gansbaai. The third site may be at Thyspunt in the Eastern Cape near Oyster Bay.

## Overcoming Factional Differences

Until now, the outcome of the fight in South Africa between proponents and opponents of nuclear power has seemed uncertain—the struggle has not been conducted in the open.

In 2009, Zuma organized a National Planning Commission with former Finance Minister Trevor Manuel as chairman and billionaire Cyril Ramaphosa (now Deputy President) as deputy chairman. The resulting National Development Plan (NDP) could have been written in London or Washington. It specified that South Africa needed a "less energy- and carbon-intensive economy," and projected that the manufacturing sector should actually decline from 12% of gross domestic product in 2010 to 9.6% in 2030! At the time, the proposal to build more nuclear power plants had already been under serious consideration for years, but the NDP proposed a re-evaluation and possible scrapping of the nuclear proposal entirely. Zuma—in what now appears to have been a political maneuver—endorsed the NDP and obtained the endorsement of his cabinet and the ruling party, the African National Congress (ANC), in 2012.

In March 2013, however, at the BRICS Summit in Durban, South Africa, Zuma and Russian President Vladimir Putin met on the sidelines and discussed South Africa's nuclear power needs. The Russian press then reported that Russia would bid for the contract to build the nuclear power plants if South Africa went ahead with the project. The two heads of state met again in Sochi, on the Black Sea, in May 2013, to continue their discussion.

The plan now endorsed by the Zuma government is similar in some respects to the one approved by the cabinet under President Thabo Mbeki in June 2008, but is

less ambitious. The Mbeki cabinet approved a plan for 40 GW of new energy by 2025, of which 20 GW would be nuclear; the current plan is for 9.6 GW of new nuclear by that date. In 2008, Areva (France) and Westinghouse (United States) were both willing to build, but depended on South Africa to find the financing, which it could not.

Finance was also a major obstacle to South Africa's continuation of its Pebble Bed Modular Reactor (PBMR) project. The project was mothballed in 2010; some of its personnel are still working in South Africa's nuclear industry. The South African PBMR would be the reactor of choice for deployment to much of Africa because its high operating temperature makes it highly efficient, and because it can be very small (80 MW electric). It is inherently safe, requiring no sensors and no shutdown mechanisms to respond to overheating. The physics of the fuel elements is such that nuclear fission simply ceases above a certain temperature.

China is currently working on a PBMR. Resumption of the South African project is not currently under discussion, but one can imagine a collaboration with China, possibly with funding from the BRICS bank, to get PBMR units coming off the assembly line in South Africa. These units are too small to be suitable for use within the relatively more developed economy of South Africa itself.

Russia has now made clear its readiness to meet the requirements laid out by the Zuma government, including the financing. Sergei Kiriyenko, CEO of the Federal Atomic Energy Agency (Rosatom), has said that "The Russian Federation is ready to provide concessional financing" for the plants if an agreement is signed for their construction. Russia's willingness to finance is a major reason why it is getting the contracts to build new nuclear plants in a half dozen countries.

In anticipation of an actual contract, Rosatom and the South African Ministry of Energy initialed a broad agreement on Nov. 25, 2013, for a strategic partnership in nuclear power development. It included providing technology and the training of specialists. Local con-



Eskom

*The nuclear plant at Koeberg, South Africa is currently the only one on the continent. It provides 1,800 MW, or 5%, of the country's electric power.*

tent (South African components and materials) was estimated at 30% for the first plant, and more than 50% thereafter. That would include localization of fuel production, through construction of a plant to assemble fabricated fuel elements. Rosatom has also opened a marketing office in Johannesburg.

On the sidelines of the BRICS Summit just ended in Brazil, Zuma had bilateral talks with both Putin and Chinese President Xi Jinping, and nuclear power was on the agenda. China's nuclear power companies have organized a bid to build the six reactors by 2030.

## A Hostile Press

President Zuma's announcement that his government would build the new nuclear power plants, disregarding the NDP's view, produced the expected reaction in the press. One imagines flashing red warning lights going off at the South African daily *Mail & Guardian*. On June 27, under the headline, "Nuclear Urgency Raises Alarm," it wrote, "The state seems set on going the atomic route despite the huge financial implications," adding, "The apparent urgency about nuclear procurement runs counter to key government policies..."

The flak actually started years ago. The South African press, awash with propaganda of British origin, appears to be entirely hostile to nuclear power. (The British are building more nuclear power plants at home, but their oligarchs don't want South Africa to have them!) The press has featured a series of arguments hostile to

nuclear power development by “experts,” sometimes citing the NDP’s erroneous projection of a decrease in the growth rate of energy demand—the projection could only serve the function of a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Access to abundant energy is an enabler of productive activity, which in turn, demands more energy. It is claimed that investing in nuclear power plants does not generate enough jobs. There will certainly not be many jobs if South Africa is constantly suffering blackouts. Windmills, imposed on South Africa by certain lenders, are like solar panels—they are a retreat to lower energy-flux density; these toys will never power an advanced industrial economy. South Africa’s coal and gas—of limited energy-flux density—are also going to run out. Nuclear power is a necessity.

It is claimed that South Africa needs a labor-intensive economy (creating many jobs at lesser skill levels), not a capital-intensive one (requiring higher skill levels and fewer workers per unit of output, as in a nuclear power plant). In fact, there must be employment for a continuum of skill levels if the workforce as a whole is to progress toward greater cognitive power. In South Africa today, large public works projects to provide large-scale employment, are urgently needed.

## **The Empire Goes for Regime Change**

The British financial empire will seek all possible avenues to disrupt the implementation of South Africa’s nuclear plans and crush the assertion of sovereignty that made those plans possible. The empire has seen this moment coming. It has been laying the groundwork for another of its regime-change operations—as seen in Iraq, Libya, Georgia, Ukraine, and elsewhere. The cultivation of disrespect and often hatred for President Zuma throughout the press is a sign of worse to come.

ANC Secretary General Gwede Mantashe recently warned of a possible regime-change scheme against South Africa in connection with the recent five-month strike of platinum miners who are members of the up-start Association of Mineworkers and Construction Union (Amcu), which has made impossibly high-wage demands. Mantashe did not see the threat in relation to South Africa’s nuclear plans, but those plans alone are sufficient cause for regime change in the eyes of the British oligarchs. Regime change is, in fact, on the oligarchs’ agenda.

One arm of the current regime-change operations is the Alternative Information and Development Centre (AIDC), headquartered in Cape Town. Mantashe noted

that in the conduct of the five-month strike—which damaged the economy—there was hostile foreign influence operating through the AIDC. Mantashe correctly saw in this the possibility of eventual wider action to unseat the government. (While Mantashe did not identify the AIDC by name, the press made the connection, as did the AIDC.)

The AIDC is, in fact, supported by the Open Society movement run by George Soros, the vicious speculator who has played a large role in overthrowing governments and getting drugs legalized worldwide. The AIDC—which propagates the global warming hoax—also works with the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), which owed its founding to Prince Bernhard of the Netherlands (a member of the Nazi Party) and Prince Philip of Britain (all four of his sisters married Nazis, and three of them joined the party). After all, Hitler was himself a greenie. This is the crowd that wants to see the population of the planet reduced from 7 billion to 1 billion.

Another expression of Soros’s influence is the *Mail & Guardian*, which acknowledges that “Among the M&G Centre for Investigative Journalism’s funders are two entities that are part of George Soros’s Open Society network.” The Centre is also known as amaBungane.

It has not escaped the notice of the ANC leadership that agitator and demagogue Julius Malema was working with the AIDC-Amcu strike. Malema has referred to billionaire Tokyo Sexwale—the darling of London and Wall Street—as “my leader.” Here again is the Soros influence—Sexwale has drunk the Soros Kool-Aid and frequently referred to “the open society” in the days when he was helping to launch Malema. But Soros seems to have cut Sexwale loose in 2010, when the M&G Centre published the first of two exposés of some of Sexwale’s dirty dealings—the exposés allege that he was involved in taking over assets in the Democratic Republic of Congo that belonged to others.

The Soros operations are a major part of the picture, but not the only one. There is also the combination of Earthlife Africa, groundWork (Friends of the Earth South Africa), and Greenpeace Africa. Internationally, Greenpeace and Friends of the Earth, like their forebears the Luddites, have a history of violence.

Africa is, literally, the dark continent. A satellite photo of the continent at night demonstrates it dramatically—there are very few concentrations of light. South Africa has a mission to revolutionize Africa—and only nuclear power can provide the spark.