

British Drive Against BRICS Member South Africa Intensifies

by David Cherry and Ramasimong Phillip Tsokolibane

March 23—*Washington Post* readers were surprised on March 15 to see, as its banner lead story, “S. African Nuclear Plans Unnerve U.S.” The authors’ access to letters from President Barack Obama to South African President Jacob Zuma, suggests that the story originated in the White House. The intended shocker—spread across four columns on page 1, and a full two-page spread on the inside—warns the world of the alleged dangers of South Africa having 485 pounds of bomb-grade, highly enriched uranium, remaining from the era of Afrikaner rule. The story did not identify any “S. African nuclear plans.”

The authors, Douglas Birch and R. Jeffrey Smith—two scoundrels from the (misnamed) Center for Public Integrity in Washington—writing two days before a no-confidence vote on Zuma, wrote, “The chief obstacle to achieving one of the White House’s top arms control priorities, according to U.S. officials, is Zuma. . . .”

While apparently met with a yawn in South Africa, the story exposed that the British Empire and its U.S. allies—notably President Barack Obama and State Department hit-woman Victoria Nuland—are upset about *something*. That something is South Africa’s participation in the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa), and its drive to build more nuclear power plants—in the interests of all Africa. The development of the continent to end misery and poverty depends heavily on the ability of South Africa and Egypt to take the lead.

The ruling African National Congress (ANC) and, within it, the South African Communist Party (SACP), are the only South African parties with the BRICS vision. (The SACP, possibly the second-largest political entity after the ANC, operates within the ANC, and does not field candidates for public office in its own name.) SACP General Secretary Dr. Blade Nzimande explained, in Umsebenzi Online in April 2013, “The formation of BRICS is perhaps one of the most important developments since the collapse of the Soviet Union. . . . It is an attempt not to forge a hegemonic or sub-imperialist bloc, but to exploit the shifting (eco-

nomie) global balance of forces in favor of the developing world. . . . It is not a given that BRICS will inherently play a progressive role, but it is something that has to be struggled for, as it has a huge potential to play such a role. For instance imperialism will not leave BRICS alone, especially because of its potential threat in further shifting the global (economic) balance.”

As South Africa’s government continues to orient toward the BRICS system and nuclear power, the global British-centered financial power is increasingly launching operations—through its institutions and networks—to reverse this turn away from the British system. These British operations are run from the U.K., the United States, and Europe—and in South Africa, from Johannesburg, Durban, Cape Town, and elsewhere.

Underlying these nasty operations is a general strategy to destroy the hegemony of the ANC. The immediate goal is to obstruct and immobilize the ANC government in the short term while a more enduring reversal of South Africa’s chosen course is devised, which would mean, at a bare minimum, to get the ANC vote in national and provincial elections down to less than 50%. A further goal is regime change or “color revolution,” once conditions for such an upheaval are adequately prepared. Regime change damages the institutions and the economy, pleasing the British oligarchs, who savored the destruction of Libya.¹

The Mantra: ‘Zuma Must Go’

A mobilization of the major opposition parties around the demand that “Zuma Must Go,” is underway. The resulting, multiple forms of attack on Zuma are, of course, attacks on the ANC. If the oppositional alliance can force Zuma out, it can threaten any subsequent President. A fistful of attacks came, one after another, in advance of the no-confidence vote.

The alliance for mobilization against Zuma began

1. See “No to British Regime Change in South Africa!” in *EIR*, Jan. 16, 2015.



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President Jacob Zuma of South Africa, and Argentine President Cristina Fernández, a close ally of the BRICS, who also faces destabilization, on the occasion of the Nov. 11, 2010 meeting of the G20 in Seoul, South Korea.

last November and includes the two most important parties in opposition—the Democratic Alliance (DA, 89 seats in the National Assembly, the lower house) and the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF, 25 seats)—and five other parties. But the ANC holds 248 of the 400 seats in the National Assembly. The DA is tied to British interests, including mining and financial interests, and the EFF is the upstart party of Julius Malema, the expelled former president of the ANC Youth League, an agitator with pro-British money behind him.

The opposition parties are focusing their attack on President Zuma over government money spent to upgrade Zuma’s rural compound at Nkandla. Public Protector Thuli Madonsela had found that more was spent than was necessary to improve security, and recommended that Zuma pay some of the upgrade costs himself. Zuma has so far shown little interest in doing so, seeing the dispute as an attack on his power.

It is this little tempest of tertiary importance that the opposition, led by the DA, has chosen as a proxy for the actual issues—alignment with the BRICS and the nu-

clear power build—which it has so far preferred to address obliquely. It is the high-horse rhetoric of “Zuma is a thief” that the opposition relies on for demagogic fire-power.

State of the Nation Address Disrupted

The Nkandla tempest was the pretext for a pre-planned disruption of the Feb. 12 televised sitting of Parliament for Zuma’s State of the Nation Address. A minor (but very hip) South African website, 2oceansvibe.com, expressed the spirit perfectly—two weeks before the event—in the headline, “Get the Popcorn: Zuma’s Biggest Parliamentary Embarrassment Will Be Televised.” The accompanying article hoped for an improved version of the EFF’s November 2014 disruption and fracas in the National Assembly over the Nkandla issue. And it was.

Julius Malema—in the bright red jumpsuit adopted as the uniform of his party—interrupted Zuma in a belligerent manner to demand to know, right then and there, when he was going to pay back the Nkandla money. When Malema repeatedly ignored the Speaker’s order to leave, the Speaker overreacted and called in security personnel and police to eject all of the EFF MPs. They didn’t go quietly, and a general punch-up ensued before they were dragged out. On his way out, EFF Commissar for Policy, Research and Political Education Floyd Shivambu is reported to have said, “Next time, we will be armed.” Outside, Malema called the ANC government a “police state.” The EFF’s behavior was reminiscent of Hitler’s Nazis before he came to power, noted Jeremy Cronin, the Deputy Minister of Public Works.

And what did the oh-so-liberal DA MPs do as the EFF MPs were being expelled? They walked out—feigning disgust over the treatment meted out to the lawless EFF! One could be excused for thinking that the DA lacked any principles whatever. Here was Malema disrupting the President and Parliament to demand “the money,” while Malema himself owes \$1.3 million in evaded taxes, enjoys a pricey lifestyle, and is facing charges of fraud, corruption, money laundering, and racketeering, while claiming that his party is a “Marxist-Leninist-Fanonian organization” in the preface to the 2014 *EFF Election Manifesto*. He has twice been convicted of hate speech.

But no, the DA does have a principle, an overriding

one: The British financial system of vulture capitalism must rule. No to the BRICS, no to nuclear power. If Malema can help, fine; he's an ally. What the DA likes about Malema is that he is a bully who can also mobilize the poor and the aggrieved, which the DA cannot.

In two days of debate on Zuma's State of the Nation Address, Malema declared that Zuma would be removed, "no matter by what means." Members of the DA, dropping their mask as liberal constitutionalists, applauded him. The DA's own leader in the National Assembly, Mmusi Maimane, called Zuma "not an honorable man," but "a broken man, presiding over a broken society." Zuma responded to the debate with a poised speech on Feb. 19, described by one of his opponents, journalist Ranjeni Munusamy, as extending an "olive branch across the House" that "tackled some very contentious issues."

Dirty Tricks

A sequence of dirty tricks overlapped these developments. On Feb. 16, the *Rand Daily Mail* attempted to spook Zuma with a threat. The news aggregator site, run by senior journalist Ray Hartley, reprinted an article by a prominent journalist entitled, "State of the Nation: In Zuma's Grip," replacing the headline with its own: "Jacob Zuma: Be afraid, be VERY afraid." The headline bore no relation to the article.

On Feb. 22, an investigative report in the *Sunday Times* (South Africa) claimed that Zuma's personal security was so poor that he was being poisoned for months in 2014 before it was diagnosed. Zuma is supposed to have suspected one of his wives. But one of the reporters on the story, Matthew Savides, in an interview, would only say that poison was suspected. We know only that Zuma was seriously ill for months before and after the July 2014 BRICS meeting in Fortaleza, Brazil.

A WikiLeaks-type operation, dubbed the "Spy Cables," leaking South African intelligence communications and internal reports, began Feb. 24. The chosen vehicle for publishing the leaks was Al-Jazeera, sometimes known as BBC East, which acquired the hundreds of intelligence cables and documents, the source of which—Al-Jazeera claimed—"appears to be" a leaker inside the State Security Agency (SSA). Al-Jazeera stories based on the documents were written by Doha-based British subject and experienced leak-meister Will Jordan, "formerly" of BBC. It is impossible to know what leaked material is genuine and what was redacted, cherry-picked, or fabricated.

Finally came the March 17 vote on a motion of no confidence in Zuma, in preparation for more than a year. South Africa has a hybrid form of government, part presidential system and part parliamentary. The President can be removed with a simple majority vote of no confidence in the National Assembly. The opposition had hoped to see some ANC members breaking away. Apparently, they did not. With 342 MPs present, 221 voted against, 113 for, and 8 abstained.

Commitment to Nuclear Remains Strong

What his opponents hate is Zuma's commitment to the BRICS and a high-technology orientation, including nuclear power.

The Zuma government remains fully committed to building new nuclear power plants to produce 9,600 MW of electricity, despite the anti-Zuma campaign and a good deal of nagging and nay-saying about the planned reactors. "Experts" say that the economy cannot support the project, and that the country doesn't have the needed skilled manpower. They obscure the fact that the project is intended as a technological driver to break out of precisely those difficulties along the way, transforming the South African economy in the process.

The plan is to obtain full financing from an international partner who will also build and initially operate the plants, using South African components as much as possible, and inducting South Africans into the mastery of technical skills. The government intends to take control of the full nuclear fuel cycle.

A vendor has not yet been chosen, but the government has signed broad, inter-governmental agreements on nuclear technology with China, France, Russia, South Korea, and the U.S., and Canada and Japan are expected to sign agreements soon. The agreements pave the way for vendors in these countries to bid on the construction of the new plants; on ancillary equipment, support, and training; or both. Some vendors have already come to Tshwane (Pretoria) for "vendor parade" workshops. The formal proposal process will follow.

Dr. Kelvin Kemm—a veteran of the South African nuclear program that built and runs the nuclear power plants at Koeberg, and is now the CEO of Nuclear Africa—told the Voice of America March 19 that he expects important decisions to be made in the next few months. "For South Africa," he said, "I believe nuclear power is absolutely inevitable and essential."