



**Defence Academy**  
of the United Kingdom

Research & Assessment Branch

# African Series

Jacob Zuma: The Man of the Moment or the Man for the  
Moment?

Alex Michael & James Montagu

09/08

A large, stylized globe graphic in the bottom half of the page, showing the continents of Africa, Europe, and Asia. The globe is rendered in a light tan color with a grid of latitude and longitude lines.

# **Jacob Zuma: The Man of the Moment or the Man for the Moment?**

**Alex Michael & James Montagu**

## **Key Findings**

- Zuma is a pragmatist, forging alliances based on necessity rather than ideology. His enlarged but inclusive cabinet, rewards key allies with significant positions, giving minor roles to the leftist SACP and COSATU.
- Long-term ANC allies now hold key Justice, Police and State Security ministerial positions, reducing the likelihood of legal charges against him resurfacing.
- The blurring of party and state to the detriment of public institutions, which began under Mbeki, looks set to continue under Zuma.
- Zuma realises that South Africa relies too heavily on foreign investment, but no real change in economic policy could well alienate much of his populist support base and be decisive in the longer term.

# Jacob Zuma: The Man of the Moment or the Man for the Moment?

Alex Michael & James Montagu

## INTRODUCTION

Jacob Zuma, the new President of the Republic of South Africa and the African National Congress (ANC), is a man who divides opinion. He has been described by different groups as the next Mandela and the next Mugabe. He is a former goatherd from what is now called KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) with no formal education and a long career in the ANC, which included a 10 year spell at Robben Island and 14 years of exile in Mozambique, Swaziland and Zambia. Like most ANC leaders, his record is not a clean one and his role in identifying and eliminating government spies within the ranks of the ANC is well documented. This operation known as *Mbokodo* (Crushing Boulder) would later cause the Truth and Reconciliation Commission to find the ANC “guilty of gross violations of human rights”.<sup>1</sup> Ethnically, he is Zulu and proud. He has fathered 20 children with an assortment of wives and mistresses and remains loyal to his Zulu heritage, spending much of his time in a modest homestead on top of a ridge near Nkandla in KZN.

What is remarkable about Zuma is his strength of character and personality. His road to the highest office was not a smooth one but the defining feature of this journey was his ability to gather support from disparate elements and unite them in their dissatisfaction with Thabo Mbeki’s regime. His common touch makes him a more likable and accessible leader than Mbeki, who was often criticised for being aloof and distant and more interested in playing the international politician than engaging with the country he was supposed to be leading. Understandably amongst the Zulu population, Zuma has an almost god-like status, which has earned him the nickname ‘Black Jesus’. But, amongst the wider population, his genial disposition and his rhetoric about creating new jobs and tackling poverty have won him widespread support.

On the other hand, Zuma’s rise was greeted with a degree of nervousness amongst foreign investors and many white South Africans. Unsurprisingly, a man who sings *Awuleth’ Umshini Wami* (Bring Me My Machine Gun) at political rallies was not greeted with unanimous approval by South Africa’s white population. Furthermore, some of his Zulu values are unpalatable for white people, in particular his attitude to women. During his trial in 2006 when he was tried for the rape of a 31 year old woman, who also happened to be HIV-positive, he defended himself by saying that if a Zulu woman dressed provocatively, it meant she wanted sex, and it was a Zulu man’s duty to satisfy her.<sup>2</sup> Such views are not compatible with South Africa’s white European-style society. Investors were also concerned that as the people’s champion, Zuma’s presidency would herald a lurch to the left.

---

<sup>1</sup> Douglas Foster, 2009. *Jacob’s Ladder*. [online] (updated on 1 June 2009) Available at: <http://www.theatlantic.com/doc/200906/south-africa-zuma> [accessed on 10 June 2009].

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

Balancing the various expectations of these very different groups will be Zuma's greatest test. He inherits a South Africa that has entered a recession for the first time in 17 years, after a period of uninterrupted economic growth. However, the macroeconomic policies followed by Mandela and Mbeki, whilst raising millions of black people into the middle classes, has still left the vast majority living in pre-apartheid conditions. The gulf between rich and poor in South Africa remains one of the widest in the world. One of the main obstacles to overcoming these challenges remains the agreement made in 1994, which ended apartheid and gave black people the right to vote in exchange for a commitment not to alter the basic structure of the economy. Zuma's promises to tackle poverty and create new jobs will be hamstrung unless there is a fundamental shift in South Africa's economic policy.

However, such a fundamental shift would undoubtedly frighten off many foreign investors, whom South Africa cannot afford to lose at the moment. Currently, South Africa is working hard to get itself ready in time for next year's FIFA World Cup. It has been desperately building stadiums, new road and rail networks, and expanding airports. All of which have cost a substantial amount of money. The work on stadiums has come massively over budget; the Green Point Stadium in Cape Town and the Moses Mabhida Stadium in Durban each cost R3 billion (£228 million) and the upgrade to the Free State in Bloemfontein was estimated at R33 million and is now expected to cost R305 million.<sup>3</sup> Much of the financial backing for these huge projects comes from abroad which Zuma can ill afford to lose. Indeed, even before he became president Zuma was already visiting the US to ensure that he could rely on high levels of investment to keep plans moving for the tournament.

To restrict Zuma's options even further will be the alliance that helped to win him the presidency. Mbeki had publically fired him from the office of deputy president in 2005 after allegations that he had been involved in shady arms deals. Zuma then spent the next 2 years fighting off these charges and a further accusation of rape in the courts. However, he worked steadily building up a network of support within the trade unions, the Communist Party, the Youth League and the ANC regional offices he had worked in throughout his career. He offered himself as an alternative to Mbeki, to those who believed that the incumbent president had not done enough for workers or the rural poor. He rode this wave of discontent and defeated Mbeki in a contest for the presidency of the ANC in December 2007. This effectively left Mbeki with fractured support within the party and he was forced to resign, which he did in September 2008, leaving the road to the presidency clear for Zuma.

So Zuma in his first year in office is faced with a complex dilemma. How can he keep the promises he made to South Africa's poor and his leftist political allies whilst still keeping foreign investment coming in and guiding South Africa through its first recession for the best part of 2 decades? This paper will argue that he will not. It will argue that Zuma has neither the intention nor the fiscal space to start introducing a more left-friendly economic policy. He will continue where Mbeki left off, whilst making cosmetic changes to make this reality more palatable to the electorate. The paper will primarily focus upon Zuma and the ANC's domestic policies and their drive to stabilise South Africa and its economy. The appointment of Maite Nkoana-Mashabane as the new Minister of International Relations and Cooperation, a relative unknown and highly inexperienced in diplomatic circles,

---

<sup>3</sup> Simon Austin, 2009. *Is South Africa ready for 2010*. [online] (updated on 11 June 2009) Available at: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/sport1/hi/football/8088624.stm> [accessed on 11 June 2009].

demonstrates Zuma/ANC intentions to focus on domestic issues.<sup>4</sup> This is in stark contrast to Mbeki's much criticised approach of neglecting South African problems in favour of regional and international concerns.

The first section will look at the cabinet he has chosen and how it has been assembled to keep the economic conservatives in the driving seat. The second section will look at his first actions as president and will argue that although he is a wholly different man to Mbeki, he is unlikely to take a wholly different approach. Those who worried that Zuma's 'triumph heralds the arrival in power of barbarians carelessly determined to destroy all that was good about Mbeki's Rome' have little to fear.<sup>5</sup>

## **KEY PLAYERS – A BALANCED TEAM?**

Jacob Zuma publicised his first Cabinet on the 10<sup>th</sup> May 2009. After the announcement Zuma was asked by the BBC what his first role in his new office would be, to which he replied "drink a cup of rooibos tea, with honey and lemon".<sup>6</sup> This instantly led a number of journalists to deduce that Zuma did not have the requisite knowledge or policies that could save South Africa from falling further into recession. However, this would be an unfair assessment. South Africa's new president has managed, with this cabinet, to carefully address the differing demands of his millions of poor black supporters desiring extra state spending, and the powerful rich business community.<sup>7</sup> Although his support base in his overthrow of Mbeki was clearly to the left of the economic spectrum; Zuma has the backing of the South African Communist Party (SACP) and the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), he has continuously denied planning to change economic policy. Amid speculation that he would be less business friendly than his predecessor, this paper will show that Zuma is unlikely to increase state spending dramatically, regardless of pressure or popular support from the left. The COSATU and the SACP themselves will recognise that "the alliance with the ruling party did not prevent for the first decade of South Africa's transition a slide to what they perceive as neo-liberalism".<sup>8</sup> Little is about to change.

## **A Mixed Bunch**

During his campaign Zuma rode on the anti-Mbeki sentiment, continuously referring to the former President's cabinet as 'the president and his briefcase-carriers'. A few months on and he has now found the need to find his own briefcase-carriers, and its selection is critical to South Africa's future development. In some respects President Zuma has repaid his supporters with positions within the cabinet, although the degree of power these positions hold will be addressed in more detail later in this section. How proficient they will be in running a government remains to be seen. United Democratic Movement (UDM) leader Bantu Holomisa has raised concerns that: "these newly-crowned princes and princesses should not be allowed to behave like their predecessors - by usurping the powers of

<sup>4</sup> Camilla Elowson, 2009. *Clouds at the horizon? Security challenges in South Africa's post-transition period*. [online] (updated on 1 June 2009) Available at: <http://www2.foi.se/rapp/foir2765.pdf> [accessed on 25 June 2009].

<sup>5</sup> Roger Southall, 2008. *Thabo Mbeki's fall: the ANC and South Africa's democracy*. [online] (updated on 13 October 2008) Available at: <http://www.opendemocracy.net/article/thabo-mbekis-fall-the-anc-and-south-africas-democracy> [accessed on 16 June 2009].

<sup>6</sup> Joseph Winter, 2009. *Zuma calms markets with new cabinet*. [online] (updated on 10 May 2009) Available at: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/8042921.stm> [accessed on 20 May 2009].

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Habib, A. 2008. *Politics and human-oriented development*, in: *Zumanomics*, 2009 Jacana, South Africa pp 163-184.

the Accounting Officers (i.e. DGs) to issue political directives on matters such as where tenders should be awarded".<sup>9</sup> The broad range of his support base has produced a cabinet made up both of those with merit and understanding and of a few who could be considered as 'undesirables'. The cabinet is clearly bloated; however, it is an extremely inclusive cabinet which has appealed to many sectors of society. Zuma has not only "...rewarded loyalists but also promoted whites, Asians, and technocrats"<sup>10</sup>. Zuma has cultivated an 'all-inclusive' approach in his cabinet, highlighted by the fact that around half of the cabinet members are women.

The range of different backgrounds included in the cabinet is emphasised none more so than by the inclusion of Pieter Mulder, leader of the Freedom Front Plus (FFP), as Deputy Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries. On the surface this seems a surprising appointment, however on closer scrutiny it appears to be an astute manoeuvre by President Zuma to reengage with the Afrikaner community.<sup>11</sup> Throughout his campaign for the Presidency Mr Zuma sought the support of the Afrikaners FFP. It could also be argued that Dr Mulder's position enhances Mr Zuma's claims for a return to the conciliatory policies of former president Nelson Mandela. Mulder's inclusion is a clear effort to appease the white community and demonstrate that there will be no repetition of Zimbabwe's Mugabe led land seizures in South Africa. It is claimed that around three thousand white farmers have been murdered in aggressive attacks on their properties since 1994 and, it could be, Mulder's inclusion is a bid to win the support of apprehensive Afrikaners.<sup>12</sup>

Zuma failed to achieve the two-thirds majority he required to change the constitution in April's election, which infers that Mulder's inclusion in the cabinet is a manifestation of Zuma's underlying desire to reach that two-thirds majority. The FFP achieved four seats in the 400 strong parliament, which, together with the ANC's 264, would be enough to reach this target. The FFP youth leader Cornelius Jansen van Rensburg, felt so apprehensive on the issue of coalition that he accused Dr Mulder of accepting the position without approval from the party. Dr Mulder shrugged off this criticism from within his own party, insisting that he had only accepted the role following significant consultation within the Afrikaner community and continued by reiterating that "there is no question about a coalition or any other similar agreements between the ANC and the FF Plus".<sup>13</sup> Therefore it can be deduced that Dr Mulder's position in the cabinet has clearly been part of a coherent strategy from the ANC/Zuma to further their outreach policy to the Afrikaner community, easing apprehension of possible land-grabs, whilst at the same time opening the door to the lingering possibility of gaining a two-thirds majority at some point in the future.

---

<sup>9</sup> South African Press Association (SAPA) news agency, 2009. 'Bloated' Cabinet Could Deliver. [online] (updated on 20 May 2009) Available at: <http://www.mg.co.za/article/2009-05-20-holomisa-bloated-cabinet-could-deliver> [accessed on 23 May 2009].

<sup>10</sup> Jonathan Clayton, 2009. *Zuma picks cabinet of all talents*. [online] (updated on 10 May 2009) Available at: <http://www.newzimbabwe.com/pages/zuma41.19788.html> [accessed on 15 May 2009]

<sup>11</sup> Zuma has been quoted as saying "Of all the white groups in South Africa, it is only the Afrikaners that are truly South African". Available at: [http://www.news24.com/News24/South\\_Africa/News/0,,2-7-1442\\_2495616,00.html](http://www.news24.com/News24/South_Africa/News/0,,2-7-1442_2495616,00.html) [accessed on 20 May 2009].

<sup>12</sup> Bruce Loudon, 2009. *Afrikaner job boost to Jacob Zuma majority*. [online] (updated 12 May 2009) Available at: <http://www.theaustralian.news.com.au/story/0,25197,25463905-32682,00.html> [accessed on 22 May 2009].

<sup>13</sup> Politics Web, 2009. *Pieter Mulder appointed deputy minister*. [online] (updated on 10 May 2009) Available at: <http://www.politicsweb.co.za/politicsweb/view/politicsweb/en/page71627?oid=128250&sn=Detail> [accessed on 1 June 2009].



## Controversy and Corruption

It is important to remember that only four years ago Zuma's political career looked to have disintegrated into oblivion when he was consecutively battling allegations of rape and corruption. It is hard to imagine any politician saving a career from these charges when many have fallen under much less scrutiny. Acquitted of the rape charge, Mr Zuma has vehemently denied the corruption charges of money-laundering originating from a contentious arms deal in 1999. In 2008 a judge dismissed the charges but appeal courts have left the possibility of the charges being resurrected. Zuma has continued to claim that, should he ever be found guilty of such charges, he would step down without hesitation. To counter the possibility of the charges ever being renewed Zuma/ANC have given the positions of power relating to Justice, Police and State Security to Zuma/ANC loyalists, who it can be assumed will ensure that the charges disappear without trace. Jeff Radebe the newly appointed Minister of Justice and Constitutional Development is ANC through and through. Having previously been the Minister for a number of departments since 1994 (including the Departments of Transport, and Public Works), Radebe is hardly likely to allow the charges brought against Zuma to resurface, especially given the instability it could cause to the Party and indeed South Africa.

Hailing from the Kwazulu-Natal region like Zuma and continuing in his role as Minister of Police is Nathi Mthethwa. He was appointed to this position on 25<sup>th</sup> September 2008 as a member of [President Kgalema Motlanthe's](#) caretaker cabinet. Although not publicly associated with the Zuma campaign, Mthethwa is seen as an ambitious, left-leaning pragmatist with close ties to Zuma. Therefore it is highly unlikely that this promising ANC asset will ever consider renewing the corruption charges against his leader.

In a recent televised conversation with Rwandan President Paul Kagame at the three-day meeting of the World Economic Forum in Cape Town, President Zuma declared that immunity would considerably aid attempts to manoeuvre certain African leaders from power. Quite clearly Zuma's comments were aimed at liberation leaders who have out stayed their mandate, such as Mugabe, stating that "the leadership of Africa today must come very boldly and deal with these issues. It's not for our sake as leaders, it's for the sake of our people, for the sake of our continent"<sup>14</sup>. Nonetheless, while these comments may be primarily aimed at African figureheads who continue to tighten their grip on their population (due to fear of retribution and criminal charges should they step down ), there could also be an element of Zuma attempting to protect himself when he decides to step down from office. It is possible, regardless of innocence or guilt, that Zuma fears stepping down from office and being forced to relive the hardship of having his private life scrutinised and his good name dragged through the mud. Should he succeed, he would be facilitating the removal of Mugabe, whilst protecting himself from further prosecution. Although it must be reiterated that such a 'guarantee of immunity' is exceedingly implausible.

Despite constant background noise of corruption allegations, the level of malpractice at the highest levels is not thought to be of a volume sufficiently spectacular to disrupt the everyday business of government. One ministerial appointment which is generating concern, however, is the new Minister of Water and Environmental Affairs, Buyelwa Sonjica. Sonjica is no stranger to this ministry having formerly been in charge of the Department of Water Affairs and Forestry

---

<sup>14</sup> Brendan Boyle, 2009. *A way out for dictators*. [online] (updated on 13 June 2009) Available at: <http://www.thetimes.co.za/News/Article.aspx?id=1017543> [accessed on 16 June 2009].

between April 2004 and May 2006. Dr Anthony Turton recalls that during this time she showed no indication that conservation was of critical importance, to Sonjica he claims, it was a “soft issue”.<sup>15</sup>

Until recently Sonjica, a trained nurse, held the position Minister of Minerals and Energy. It is her work in this department that has generated most apprehension over her appointment. During her time in this department Sonjica demonstrated a favourable approach towards the mining sector. Dr Turton believes “from her minerals and energy portfolio, getting mineral wealth out of the ground was what interested her most...she was hard with the way she managed minerals at the cost of conservation”.<sup>16</sup> Mariette Lifferink, an activist involved in the attempt to flag up the depleting gold mines and acid mine drainage, shares Dr Turton’s concerns. Having previously raised these issues and the likely impact of 10% of the water supply in certain regions becoming toxic with Sonjica early last year, the minister responded that there was little to be concerned about.<sup>17</sup> In little over a year’s time mining licences are likely to be granted by the Department of Environmental Affairs, ensuring they once again stay under Sonjica’s control.

Another of those who hail from the Kwazulu-Natal region is the new Minister of Transport Sbusiso Joel Ndebele. Shortly after accepting the position of Minister of Transport, Ndebele received the gift of an S 500 Mercedes Benz valued at R1 million from Vukuzakhe emerging contractors in KwaZulu-Natal. It is claimed that the contractors had received contracts worth more than R400-million in the department.<sup>18</sup> Opposition parties enraged by the acceptance of such a gift have voiced their disapproval, sighting that the vehicle is a clear conflict of interests. Ndebele explained that he had received the gift unannounced, and denies any conflict of interest. In response to accusations and controversy Ndebele returned the vehicle and other gifts the contractors had bestowed upon him, adding that he had asked for the presents to be sold, and the money generated to be used to start a business training programme for emerging contractors.<sup>19</sup> The gift presented a first major ethics test for Zuma’s new Cabinet, which it seems to have effectively resolved.

### **Minister in the Presidency – Performance Monitoring**

To centralise power for the ANC at presidential level, Zuma has created two new roles under the headings Ministers’ in the Presidency. In an attempt to eradicate corruption within his own organisation, Zuma has created the role of Performance Monitoring and Evaluation as well as Administration in the Presidency. This is to be headed by the ambitious Collins Chabane who will work extremely closely with both Zuma and Trevor Manuel (who takes on the role of the Minister in the Presidency National Planning Commission). Zuma stated on its creation that the roles of Manuel and Chabane will be to “have the holistic picture of the government” for performance monitoring purposes.<sup>20</sup> Chabane has been a very close associate of

<sup>15</sup> Dr Turton is a water expert who was suspended from the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research in 2008 after leaking information on the degradation of South Africa’s water systems.

<sup>16</sup> Fiona Forde, 2009 “*Tide of cries at water boss*” published by South African newspaper The Sunday Independent on 17 May.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Sapa, 2009. *Transport minister accepts ‘thank you’ Merc*. [online] (updated on 18 May 2009) Available at: <http://www.mg.co.za/article/2009-05-18-transport-minister-accepts-thank-you-merc> [accessed on 28 May 2009].

<sup>19</sup> Sapa, 2009. *Ndebele returns the car*. [online] (updated on 19 May 2009) Available at: <http://www.polity.org.za/article/ndebele-returns-the-car-2009-05-19> [accessed on 25 May 2009].

<sup>20</sup> Newsweek (Karen MacGregor), 2009. *‘I’m Not for Revenge’ - South Africa’s presumptive next president on his legal battles, Zulu identity and learning to forgive*. [online] (updated on 16 April 2009) Available at: <http://www.newsweek.com/id/194279> [accessed on 27 April 2009].



Zuma's for over thirty years. He is one of the longest-serving members of the ANC's National Executive Committee (having served for 19 years), as well as sitting on the ANC's powerful National Deployment Committee and the International Relations and National Disciplinary Committees. Chabane is clearly a powerful and influential man. This is acknowledged by the fact that he is credited with being one of the main forces behind turning around a province that had been an Mbeki stronghold during the bitter campaign.<sup>21</sup> After announcing the cabinet, Zuma warned his new team that, "We will not tolerate laziness or incompetence".<sup>22</sup> The selection of Chabane, a man whom Zuma clearly trusts, as a 'cabinet enforcer', is likely to hammer this statement home to the cabinet and parliament. There is grave concern that this new position could usurp the role of parliament, yet only time will tell. Nevertheless, the appointments of Collins Chabane and Trevor Manuel emphasise emphatically the new president's move to concentrate power in his office by installing the core of the ANC.

### **Minister in the Presidency - New Planning Commission**

Former Finance Minister Trevor Manuel has now been moved to become Minister in the Presidency National Planning Commission (NPC). This highly respected official has finally outlined the task ahead of him, after many commentators felt that his 'promotion' was merely a way of moving him aside. Addressing parliament during the debate over President Zuma's first State of nation address on the 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2009, Manuel commented that there were a number of reasons behind the creation of the new planning commission. These were to improve coordination between South Africa's three spheres of government,<sup>23</sup> to build a more competent public administration "which is both more focused and more accountable", whilst significantly maintaining the ability to deal with the needs of the future.<sup>24</sup> A Green Paper on where and how planning will fit into the government system is expected from Manuel's NPC very soon. Manuel long complained, when in charge of the finance ministry "that while he built government resources, other departments squandered them".<sup>25</sup> This new role, however, should enable Manuel to further enhance his well-cultivated international popularity and credibility, at the same time as acting as a "watchdog and overseer of all government departments".<sup>26</sup> In essence his duty will be to ensure that government resources are no longer wasted, especially given the current recession that South Africa finds itself. Nevertheless, not all are convinced. Chris Hart, Chief Economist at Investment Solutions has stated, "The National Planning Commission sounds like something you'd find in the Soviet Union or North Korea. The fact that Manuel is in charge is encouraging but that you have it at all is a concern".<sup>27</sup>

As stated the NPC has generated much discussion, as some analysts view its creation as a means to demote Manuel, simply a way to sideline him. It seems however that these fears are unwarranted. The position certainly has the potential

<sup>21</sup> Amukelani Chauke and Wisani Wa Ka Ngobeni, 2009. *Collins Chabane: Hero On the Rise* [online] (updated on 24 May 2009) Available at: <http://www.thetimes.co.za/PrintEdition/Article.aspx?id=1005314> [accessed on 10 June 2009].

<sup>22</sup> Joseph Winter, 2009. *Zuma calms markets with new cabinet*. [online] (updated on 10 May 2009) Available at: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/8042921.stm> [accessed on 20 May 2009].

<sup>23</sup> The three spheres of Government in South Africa are National, Provincial and Local Government.

<sup>24</sup> Sapa, 2009. *Manuel outlines his new task*. [online] (updated on 5 June 2009) Available at: <http://www.polity.org.za/article/manuel-outlines-his-new-task-2009-06-05> [accessed on 6 June 2009].

<sup>25</sup> Alex Perry, 2009. *Zuma's first moves as South African President* [online] (updated on 11 May 2009) <http://www.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,1897193,00.html> [accessed on 15 May 2009].

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Joseph Winter, 2009. *Zuma calms markets with new cabinet*. [online] (updated on 10 May 2009) Available at: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/8042921.stm> [accessed on 20 May 2009].

to become “the presidency’s de facto executive arm”<sup>28</sup> and many believe this is exactly what has happened. Manuel has been described as Zuma’s “most trusted ally in the new administration” and the man that Zuma turns to for help in matters relating to budgeting and the economy.<sup>29</sup> In essence Manuel is simply heading back to his origins. He was head of the ANC's department of economic planning in the run-up to the 1994 transition and also took the lead in the drafting of their Reconstruction and Development Programme.<sup>30</sup> Therefore the notion of the commission is as much about continuity as it is about change.<sup>31</sup> This concept is far from new. In planning how the NPC will be structured and eventually operate the cabinet will be able to draw on nearly three years of research, carried out by the Development Bank of Southern Africa and the ANC itself. Manuel is highly respected around the world and is unlikely to take on this role unless he genuinely believes that the NPC would “accelerate government's efforts to boost the economy, reduce poverty and ensure smooth infrastructure development”.<sup>32</sup> Zuma has stated that the NPC will drive policy implementation and delivery outside the bureaucratic constraints of government departments and as the “champion of delivery in assisting government fulfil its uppermost priorities”.<sup>33</sup> With the NPC responsible for strategic planning for the country it does mean, crucially, that the commission’s powers will include matters pertaining to the economy.

### **Economics Team**

This carefully leads onto another contentious issue that is likely to arise during the early part of Zuma’s presidency, the question of who is going to run the economy. Pravin Gordhan has been instated as the new Minister of Finance, taking over the role from Trevor Manuel, after his ten successful years in the South African Revenue Service. Gordhan is a close ally of Zuma’s who boasts considerable support from the SACP. He is seen as a very pragmatic choice with fiscal prudence and is credited with having run one of the most efficient government bodies during his tenure at the tax department.<sup>34</sup> For this reason, he is unlikely to be pressurised into increasing state spending by his and Zuma’s SACP backers, especially given the fact that tax revenue is considerably down due to the recession, a matter he knows all too well given his previous position. In fact, his appointment has been seen as a successful selection by all, including the markets and opposition finance spokesman Kobus Marais who believes that Gordhan is a “very credible successor” to Manuel.<sup>35</sup>

However, this does leave us with the critical question: who will actually be running the economy? As mentioned above the NPC, which will be managed by Manuel, will compose a strategy to be implemented across the government departments, including financial issues. Given Manuel’s success and recognition in this department there is a definite apprehension that the two will be unable to work

<sup>28</sup> Economist, 2009. *Who will call the economic shots?* [online] (updated on 14 May 2009) Available at: [http://www.economist.com/displaystory.cfm?story\\_id=13652858](http://www.economist.com/displaystory.cfm?story_id=13652858) [accessed on 20 June 2009].

<sup>29</sup> Mail & Guardian, 2009. *Who’s the boss? Manuel vs Mantashe.* [online] (updated on 19 June 2009) Available at: <http://www.mg.co.za/article/2009-06-19-whos-the-boss-manuel-vs-mantashe> [accessed on 21 June 2009].

<sup>30</sup> Hilary Joffe, 2009. *South Africa: New Planning Commission an Old Idea.* [online] (updated on 19 May 2009 ) Available at: <http://allafrica.com/stories/200905190046.html> [accessed on 13 June 2009].

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Bathandwa Mbola, 2009. *South Africa: New Planning Commission to Boost Govt.* [online] (updated on 10 May 2009) Available at: <http://allafrica.com/stories/200905100040.html> [accessed on 7 June 2009].

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> Highlighted by the fact that under his watch from 1999 government revenue from taxes reached its highest level ever, half a trillion Rand. New African, 2009. *‘Finally it’s Zuma, but what lies ahead?’* June 2009.

<sup>35</sup> Times Online, 2009. *Zuma takes just the one wife to £6m party.* [online] (updated on 10 May 2009) Available at: <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/africa/article6256680.ece> [accessed on 15 May 2009].

together. This concern however appears insignificant on account of the fact that Gordhan has also been closely aligned to the ministry for a number of years and despite his SACP background he seems unwilling to implement a shift to leftist economic policies. This argument has been supported by Anthony Butler who believes that Gordhan is economically orthodox and suspects that he is “a social democrat and a pragmatist, not a central planner”.<sup>36</sup>

Nevertheless, to further complicate matters, a new economics team has been assembled comprising myriad backgrounds and viewpoints. As a consequence of the SACP's support, Zuma has assigned its leader Blade Nzimande as Higher Education Minister. Chris Hart, Chief Economist at Investment Solutions, is apprehensive about this appointment, believing that “he will try and influence economic policy”, which will only add to the confusion regarding the direction of economic policy.<sup>37</sup> This is accentuated by the appointment of Ebrahim Patel as Minister of Economic Development. This former trade-unionist is clearly part of Zuma's left support and before this post he served as General Secretary of the Southern African Clothing and Textile Worker's Union (SACTWU), where he established an image as an ardent socialist. In 1994 Patel was nominated by then president Nelson Mandela to serve on the country's first Financial and Fiscal Commission. On top of this he has served on the boards of public bodies related to education, labour arbitration and economic policy. As a result it would seem Patel is a more than qualified candidate to the role, but it remains to be seen whether this mix of ministers will be able to find common ground and take the country forward. It certainly seems on the face of it that Manuel will continue to pull the strings with assistance from Gordhan. It remains to be seen how COSATU and the SACP react to this in the long term. When asked about the future direction of economic policy, Zuma claimed that it would be reassessed by the new economics team and that he did not want to “jump the gun”<sup>38</sup>. Despite this, on a number of recent occasions, Zuma has admitted that it is impossible to change the existing economic policies, especially given the current economic crisis. His analogy of the situation provides some clarity, “it means like if you are wearing a size six or something, and because there is starvation and reduced weight you have to cut your cloth according to the size. But still wear the same cloth. In terms of the approach, the programs, the objectives will remain the same”.<sup>39</sup>

## Sidelined

It is important, while discussing the people who Zuma has brought into the Cabinet, to also address those he has sidelined and the possible ramifications this may have. One clear example of Zuma attempting to break away from some of the inadequacies of the last regime is the sidelining of Dr ‘Garlic’ Manto Tshabala-Msimang, Health Minister under Mbeki, who advocated a diet of onions and garlic to help combat HIV infection. This is not a big surprise, and it's very doubtful whether Tshabala-Msimang would offer much anyway. There was also no place for avid Jacob Zuma supporter Winnie Mandela. This highly controversial figure, at the age of 73, was probably seen by Zuma as too controversial (internationally) and old

<sup>36</sup> Anthony Butler is Professor of Public Policy at the University of Cape Town. Economist, 2009. *Who will call the economic shots?* [online] (updated on 14 May 2009) Available at: [http://www.economist.com/displaystory.cfm?story\\_id=13652858](http://www.economist.com/displaystory.cfm?story_id=13652858) [accessed on 20 June 09].

<sup>37</sup> Joseph Winter, 2009. *Zuma calms markets with new cabinet.* [online] (updated on 10 May 2009) Available at: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/8042921.stm> [accessed on 20 May 2009].

<sup>38</sup> Joseph Winter, 2009. *Zuma calms markets with new cabinet.* [online] (updated on 10 May 2009) Available at: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/8042921.stm> [accessed on 20 May 2009].

<sup>39</sup> Newsweek (Karen MacGregor), 2009. *'I'm Not for Revenge' - South Africa's presumptive next president on his legal battles, Zulu identity and learning to forgive.* [online] (updated on 16 April 2009) Available at: <http://www.newsweek.com/id/194279> [accessed on 27 April 2009].

for a post. It is likely she will be given the respectful title of 'mother of the nation' instead.

Most significantly however was the demotion of Barbara Hogan. Hogan was instated as Minister of Health by Kgalema Motlanthe when he took office as President on 25 September 2008, to replace the inept Tshabala-Msimang. She proved so successful in the role that Time Magazine named her in their 100 most influential people in the world this year.<sup>40</sup> Hogan engineered a radical change in South Africa's national AIDS policy acknowledging that HIV causes AIDS and embraced antiretroviral drugs. She pledged that pregnant mothers with HIV will be treated with nevirapine to stop transmission at birth, subsequently ending a policy of denial that may have been responsible for the loss of an estimated 330,000 lives.<sup>41</sup> Not bad for less than one year in office. However, after speaking out against the ANC over their actions towards the Dalai Lama,<sup>42</sup> she has now been demoted to the role of Minister of Public Enterprises. It is hard to imagine that this downgrading has anything to do with her previous work. Therefore it is clear that, through internal party politicking, Zuma has now deprived the health services of one of the most internationally respected women in his cabinet. This role has been given to the relative unknown Dr Aaron Motsoaledi, alarming AIDS campaigners throughout the country. As with much of Zuma's cabinet, and the ANC policies, it seems that a period of 'wait and see' will have to prevail to assess how significant this change will be.

Unsurprisingly, despite his best efforts, Zuma was unable to persuade former trade union leader turned billionaire Cyril Ramaphosa to take a position. Ramaphosa is an ANC legend, viewed by many as the President that never was.<sup>43</sup> The financial sector would have seen his inclusion in the cabinet as a reassuring step. As Alex Perry from Time puts it, "Ramaphosa has been out of South Africa's political scene for a long time. A cabinet position would have been something; his absence is merely more of the same".<sup>44</sup>

## The Unions

Zuma has had to balance many different competing interests within his cabinet, including prominent left-wingers. Conversely it does seem that these prominent SACP members have only been included in relatively minor posts. The example of Blade Nzimande, General Secretary of the SACP, as Higher Education Minister, and his deputy, Jeremy Cronin, as Deputy Transport Minister spring to mind. However, at least seven of the cabinet ministers are former union leaders. These include Deputy President Kgalema Molanthe, Labour Minister Membathisi Mdladana and Economic Development Minister Ebrahim Patel. As explained above, Patel is unlikely to be given a free-reign on economic matters given the colossal status and power Manuel is likely to have. Molanthe's role is still unclear but given his inability as President to predict the seriousness of the recession it is doubtful that Zuma will give him too much responsibility. His appointment certainly seems to spring from a desire for continuity and ANC appeasement. Nonetheless foreign investors quite correctly remain cautious. Given the influence COSATU and the SACP have had in Zuma obtaining power, it is doubtful that they will just accept this marginalisation.

---

<sup>40</sup> Time Magazine's 100 most influential people in the World 2009.

<http://www.time.com/time/specials/packages/completelist/0,29569,1894410,00.html> [accessed on 15 June 2009].

<sup>41</sup> Time Magazine's 100 most influential people in the World 2009.

[http://www.time.com/time/specials/packages/article/0,28804,1894410\\_1893209\\_1893464,00.html](http://www.time.com/time/specials/packages/article/0,28804,1894410_1893209_1893464,00.html) [accessed on 15 June 2009].

<sup>42</sup> The ANC refused to grant the Dalai Lama a visa when due to visit a Peace Conference earlier this year.

<sup>43</sup> Although endorsed by Nelson Mandela as a successor he was outmanoeuvred by Mbeki in 1999

<sup>44</sup> Alex Perry, 2009. *Zuma's first moves as South African President*. [online] (updated on 11 May 2009)

<http://www.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,1897193,00.html> [accessed on 15 May 2009].

## Other Key Positions

The appointment of Max Sisulu as Speaker of Parliament is politically significant, and should have a fundamental role in determining whether parliament implements its obligation to hold the executive to account. In his acceptance speech, Max Sisulu paid tribute to the women who had preceded him, highlighting that after 15 years of female speakers he expected to be called Madam Speaker a few times. This is not the first time the former activist has served in Parliament but his developing political affiliations are difficult to ascertain. He has soared to the office of speaker as part of the Zuma-led ANC, and seemingly is an extremely popular choice.<sup>45</sup> He also sits on the party's national executive committee and there was even some speculation linking him to a role in Zuma's first Cabinet. Thereby it would seem that he has close ties with Zuma and that his role could be a reward for campaigning efforts.

Finally it is important to note that in October 2009 Chief Justices will be appointed by the president, with assistance from the Judicial Service Commission. These key positions will be another issue to monitor with regards to Zuma's selection of candidates.

## Summary

The appointment of his first cabinet emphasises Zuma's attempts to balance the numerous competing interests of his coalition backers. It is clear that the cabinet is larger than previous ones, but should it achieve its ambition of stabilising South Africa this will be of little concern. He has rewarded a handful of his left-wing allies from the SACP and COSATU, but these seem on the whole to be in mainly junior ministries, for instance, Economic Development Minister Ebrahim Patel, whose role will surely be usurped by Manuel and Gordhan. It seems Zuma is keen to re-assure South Africa's foreign investors, on which they depend intrinsically, that respected officials such as Manuel have not only been retained but given more power to pull the strings. The markets have reacted favorably to the announcement, which is an encouraging sign for South Africa. Only time will tell whether the controversial allegations of corruption and rape will undermine Zuma's reputation abroad. For the time being, at least, his position looks secure. The UDM are quite fearful of the centralisation of power towards the presidency, however the fact that Trevor Manuel is involved has reduced these concerns. As with everything in Zuma's cabinet, these issues will only become more apparent over time. It certainly looks as if Manuel's role is indeed a powerful one, in which he can pull the purse strings and control the planning direction for South Africa. However, if this was to change, uneasiness among South Africa's foreign investors would certainly creep in. The appointments of Manuel and Chabane are clear attempts by Zuma to solidify power for the ANC in the Presidency, leaving a lasting legacy on his departure.

## POLICY CHALLENGES AND DELIVERY

As is so often the case, in the infancy of any new government there is always a sense of excitement and anticipation - a feeling that all that was old, stagnant and wrong with the predecessor would be swept away and replaced with a fresh, vigorous and enthusiastic new administration. This was undoubtedly the sentiment shared by many South Africans when Jacob Zuma was sworn in as President of the Republic on 9<sup>th</sup> May 2009. Indeed, Zuma's journey to the lofty pinnacle of the

---

<sup>45</sup> Sisulu reportedly received a standing ovation from the newly formed parliament prior to his acceptance speech.



presidency was described by one periodical as ranking “among the great hurdles and obstacles that had to be navigated by great men in modern times, Presidents Mandela and Obama immediately come to mind”.<sup>46</sup> In South Africa there is no doubt that change is expected. A shift in economic policy to the left to tackle poverty will be anticipated by Zuma’s allies in the leftist part of the alliance, and a clearer and more transparent approach to government will be demanded by the country as a whole. However, are such high expectations reasonable? And can a wholesale change of economic and political direction be expected from a man who worked closely both with and against Thabo Mbeki for the best part of ten years? Will such exposure and the impact of the last four years of party infighting allow for a new and fresh approach to government, especially in the current economic climate? The relationship between the ANC and its president will provide some insight to these questions.

### **The ANC and Zuma**

In an interview in April 2009, after the ANC had won the elections with a slightly reduced majority, Zuma was asked if there were any particular policies that he would prioritise when in power. He replied:

“No, that has been defined by the ANC in its last conference. I can’t introduce new policies. What I am talking about is what the ANC has said we need to do. I cannot have Jacob Zuma economic policies. They are going to remain ANC policies”.<sup>47</sup>

On this evidence, it appears that Zuma intends to remain loyal to the ANC alliance and allow the party to dictate policy. Having been instrumental in the removal of Mbeki from the leadership of the ANC and the state, Zuma knows full well the importance of keeping the party united and on side. It was Mbeki’s unpopularity with many sections of the ANC, in particular the marginalised COSATU and the SACP that allowed Zuma to be elected as ANC President in December 2007, a development which destabilised Mbeki and would eventually lead to his removal from the presidency less than a year later. So when, the general secretary of COSATU, Zwelinzima Vavi announced that “We are the policymakers in the alliance, and the government implements. The government does not lead anymore”, there was no response or complaint from Zuma.<sup>48</sup> The extent of COSATU and SACP’s influence in policy making will be addressed later in the chapter.

The reality of this state of affairs, however, has not sat well with everyone. In early June, there has been an increasing rumble of discontent from various non-political sources, usually within the media, who appear unhappy with what they see as the country being held to ransom by the ANC through deliberate attempts to undermine the authority of the president. Indeed one commentator has suggested that there has been a blurring of the lines between party and state and that Gwede Mantashe, the ANC secretary-general, has been “usurping” the powers of the president.<sup>49</sup> These claims centre on a number of incidents where matters which ordinarily would be dealt with by the government at the Union Buildings are being conducted at Luthuli House, the ANC Headquarters. The first such incident was a ministerial

<sup>46</sup> New African, 2009. ‘*Finally it’s Zuma, but what lies ahead?*’ June 2009.

<sup>47</sup> Newsweek (Karen MacGregor), 2009. ‘*I’m Not for Revenge*’ - *South Africa's presumptive next president on his legal battles, Zulu identity and learning to forgive*. [online] (updated on 16 April 2009) Available at: <http://www.newsweek.com/id/194279> [accessed on 27 April 2009].

<sup>48</sup> Wisani Wa Ka Ngobeni, 2009. *ANC at war with Cosatu*. [online] (updated on 7 June 2009) Available at: <http://www.thetimes.co.za/News/Article.aspx?id=1013495> [accessed on 8 June 2009].

<sup>49</sup> Makhudu Sefara, Sabelo Ndlangisa and Moffet Mofokeng, 2009. *Zuma or Gwede – who is in charge?* [online] (updated on 14 June 2009) Available at: [http://jv.news24.com/City\\_Press/News/0..186-187\\_2529573.00.html](http://jv.news24.com/City_Press/News/0..186-187_2529573.00.html) [accessed on 16 June 2009].

meeting held at Luthuli House to discuss a programme on how to increase the pay of civil servants. The second was the summoning of Public Enterprises Minister Barbara Hogan by Mantashe to explain her statement that unprofitable state companies should be sold off. However, suggestions that there is anything illegal or unconstitutional about this activity have been swept aside by both Mantashe and Zuma, whose spokesperson claimed that there was “nothing wrong with the situation”.<sup>50</sup>

Ultimately, Zuma fully understands both the need for total support from the party and the nature of South African politics itself. South Africa’s democracy operates through a party political system, one that can loosely be compared with that of Britain. People vote for a party, the party then chooses its leader. That leader then remains reliant on the support of his party. Suggesting that Zuma should stand up against the ANC and assert his own authority independent of the party would be advocating a change in South Africa’s democracy to an American style presidential system. Furthermore, any independence that the presidency had was wiped out by the manner in which Mbeki was removed. It was the decision of the ANC’s National Executive Committee (NEC) to recall Mbeki, a decision which undermined parliament on the grounds that according to the constitution, it is parliament and not the governing party that has the authority to remove a president before the expiry of his second term in office. The fact that Mbeki acceded to this instruction as a “loyal and disciplined”<sup>51</sup> member of the ANC and did not force the decision through parliament “has eroded the presidency as a national institution and reduced it to an extension of the ruling party”.<sup>52</sup>

Thus, is President Zuma likely to have greater freedom of action? The answer is undoubtedly in the negative. If anything, Zuma is a president who is even more reliant on the support of his party, partly as a result of the dismissal of his predecessor and partly as a result of the manner in which he attained the highest office. After his political career was very nearly finished by criminal charges of rape and corruption, Zuma was able to gather political momentum by becoming the figurehead of the marginalised within the ANC alliance. As mentioned above, these disgruntled sections were dominated by the leftist COSATU and SACP, who had been alienated by Mbeki’s economic policies, which they saw as ‘neo-liberal’ and promoting growth without creating jobs or helping to alleviate poverty amongst the vast majority of South Africa’s black population. Zuma, with his promises to tackle poverty and redistribute South Africa’s wealth, became the left’s champion and on the back of this support was able to successfully challenge and defeat Mbeki.

Zuma’s freedom of action is consequently jeopardised by the debt of loyalty that he owes to those who brought him to power. The leftist parts of the alliance believe they played a significant part in bringing Zuma back from the dead. Before long they will come calling for their pound of flesh in the form of action on his promises to tackle poverty and ultimately alter South Africa’s economic direction from the conservative capitalism of the last 17 years to a more socialist policy of redistribution of wealth to the poorest sections of society. Indeed the number of threats of strike action in the short time that President Zuma has been in office demonstrates the intention of the unions to hold him to his word. With a membership of 2 million, which counts for about 11% of the workforce (most of

---

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> Roger Southall, 2008. *Thabo Mbeki’s fall: the ANC and South Africa’s democracy*. [online] (updated on 13 October 2008) Available at: <http://www.opendemocracy.net/article/thabo-mbekis-fall-the-anc-and-south-africas-democracy> [accessed on 16 June 2009].

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

which are in the public sector), COSATU are not an organisation that Zuma can afford to ignore.<sup>53</sup>

COSATU and affiliated unions have recently endorsed mass strike action against the Reserve Bank's interest rate policy, aimed at bringing interest rates down to what it considers acceptable levels. They blame the bank's inflation targets for the recession and job cuts and will look to block the reappointment of the bank's governor, Tito Mboweni, when his term expires in August.<sup>54</sup> Unions have also threatened further strikes against the government's Bus Rapid Transport system that could affect the way taxis operate. In addition, industrial action has already begun to press public sector wage demands. A bold ultimatum was issued to Zuma's government by National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (NUMSA) President Irvin Jim, who said "Anyone who rejects peaceful demonstrations and refuses to accept petitions from the South African working class, who are experiencing extreme economic and social difficulties not of their own making, is inviting big trouble. You are warned."<sup>55</sup> Thus, Zuma finds himself cornered at every level. He has acceded to a presidency that appears to be more subservient to the ANC than ever before, he has made promises that he is unlikely to be able to keep and he inherits a country that is entering a recession for the first time in 17 years. His room for manoeuvre is minimal at best, non-existent at worst.

### **The Way Ahead: Zuma's State of Nation Speech**

Finding himself in such a tight spot, it is hardly surprising that Zuma's first State of the Nation speech, delivered to parliament in Cape Town on 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2009, raised few eyebrows. It was the speech of a man who is aware that he has a lot of groups to please and very little in the way of political breathing space. The speech did lay out coherent targets for government but was very thin on how these targets could be attained. Perhaps the most eye-catching objective set out by Zuma was his promise to create 500,000 jobs by December 2009 and 4 million jobs by 2014.<sup>56</sup> To qualify this ambitious target, Zuma and the ANC did concede that the majority of these jobs would be temporary, initially created by the upcoming FIFA World Cup in 2010. Other areas that Zuma identified as requiring urgent government attention included infrastructure, education, health, justice and governmental reform.

In his speech Zuma allocated a budget of R787 million for massive infrastructure investment in a school building programme, public transport, water programmes and sanitation.<sup>57</sup> This outlay, along with the existing World Cup development, Zuma hopes will leave a lasting legacy for South Africa. His proposals for education also seem rather ambitious; he has set down the challenges of doubling the number of children with access to school aged 0-4 by 2014, increasing the enrolment rate in secondary schools to 95% by 2014 and implementing a zero tolerance policy for teachers who sexually abuse their pupils.<sup>58</sup>

His approach to health, in particular the AIDS issue, is also aggressive. Understandably, he wishes to distance himself from the embarrassing incident in

---

<sup>53</sup> Economist, 2009. *Payback Time*. [online] (updated on 11 June 2009) Available at: [http://www.economist.com/world/mideast-africa/displaystory.cfm?story\\_id=13834140](http://www.economist.com/world/mideast-africa/displaystory.cfm?story_id=13834140) [accessed on 15 June 2009].

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

<sup>55</sup> Patrick Bond, 2009. *Is South Africa heading left?* [online] (updated on 22 June 2009) Available at: <http://socialistworker.org/2009/06/22/is-south-africa-heading-left> [accessed on 22 June 2009].

<sup>56</sup> Jacob Zuma, 2009. *State of Nation Speech*. [online] (updated on 3 June 2009) Available at: <http://www.info.gov.za/speeches/2009/09060310551001.htm> [accessed 4 June 2009].

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

which he allegedly raped an HIV positive women and said afterwards that he had showered in order to prevent himself from contracting the virus. By taking a tough stance on AIDS, Zuma is also looking to compare himself favourably to Mbeki, whose record on this issue was disastrous. In the speech, Zuma declared that by 2011 the government aimed to reduce the rate of new HIV infections by 50% and provide 80% of those who need it with ARV (antiretroviral) treatment.<sup>59</sup> The speech also took a hard line on crime, in particular violent crimes, which it looked to cut by 7-10% per annum.<sup>60</sup>

The other area of interest that is flagged up in Zuma's opening address to the nation is the issue of governmental reform. He declared his intention to set up a ministry within the Presidency to monitor and evaluate the performance of ministers and civil servants. He has since given this job to Collins Chabane, which is indicated in more detail in the previous chapter. He announced that starting in July, using targets and output measures, cabinet ministers would be held accountable for their performance. These measures demonstrate an attempt by Zuma to make a clean break from the allegations of corruption that surrounded both himself and Mbeki, and build trust in the government once again. Further to this he declared that he would set up a public liaison capacity in the Presidency, which would receive letters and emails from the public as well as establishing a telephone hotline. Undoubtedly, Zuma intends on making government at least appear more transparent than it was under his predecessor.

Much of what has been laid out in Zuma's first State of Nation speech on the surface looks tough and ambitious. However, a consistent plan as to how these lofty goals will be reached, for the moment, remains unknown. It was a speech, which whilst promising much, actually offered very little. It would, for the time being, placate the leftist parts of the alliance but would also offer nothing too radical which might alarm foreign investors, upon whom South Africa relies. Indeed, both COSATU and SACP appeared positive about the speech; General Secretary Vavi even described it as 'reviving'.<sup>61</sup> However, the response was not all encouraging. COPE (Congress of the People) Deputy President, Mbhazima Shilowa described the speech as a 'wish list' and its President Reverend Mvume Dandala claimed that the speech contained 'no new fresh ideas'.<sup>62</sup> Such claims do ring true; much of what Zuma said could have come straight from Mbeki's State of the Nation speech of February 2008. One journalist described the speech as having a 'dreary familiarity', lacking creativity and a fresh approach.<sup>63</sup>

Furthermore, the likelihood of Zuma being able to deliver on these promises is highly debateable. Economists believe that the targets set were virtually impossible, given that evaluation systems took time to implement and that the economy was not vibrant enough to create hundreds of thousands of jobs within six months. Andrew Levy, a principal partner at Andrew Levy employment said that it would require "pulling a rabbit out of the unemployment hat", on account of South Africa's recession.<sup>64</sup> However, Zuma has since received backing from his ministers; Trade and Industry Minister Rob Davies declared that he believed that as long as the right

---

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

<sup>61</sup> Vivian Warby, 2009. *President's address receives mixed reaction*. [online] (updated on 3 June 2009) Available at: <http://www.buanews.gov.za/news/09/09060314151001> [accessed on 10 June 2009].

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> *Where was his machine gun*. Published by South African newspaper Pretoria News on 4 June 2009.

<sup>64</sup> Florence de Vries, 2009. *Zuma's job target met with disbelief – Goal perplexes analysts*. [online] (updated on 4 June 2009) Available at: <http://www.busrep.co.za/index.php?fSectionId=552&fArticleId=5013346> [accessed on 8 June 2009].



decisions were made South Africa's economic future remained bright<sup>65</sup> and Public Works Minister Geoff Doidge has labelled the 500,000 jobs target as "very achievable".<sup>66</sup> Zuma's first speech remains, in the main, unremarkable. It does not indicate any intention to change the course plotted by his predecessor, but offers enough ambitious (and potentially unattainable) targets, in particular in creating jobs, to keep the unions on side.

### **Zuma: a Likeable Mbeki?**

When Zuma was elected President, investors feared that he might hand over the reins of South Africa's economy to the left-wing elements of the alliance. Indeed both Ebrahim Patel, the minister for economic development and Membathisi Mdladlana, the labour minister are former union leaders. However, as has been outlined in the previous chapter with the creation of the new post for Trevor Manuel as head of the NPC, it seems that the economy will remain in the hands of the same people that have guided the economy to prosperity over the last 17 years. Zuma has made no secret of the fact that he does not intend to radically change South Africa's economic strategy. In response to the parliamentary debate that followed his State of the Nation address, Zuma declared that he would not deviate from the orthodox economic policies that had served South Africa well. He declared that "the pursuit of our objectives has always been based on the maintenance of a stable macro-economic environment. This is not going to change".<sup>67</sup>

Zuma's recent activity also points to a sustaining of South Africa's current economic policy. On 9<sup>th</sup> June, Zuma appointed Daniel Mminele as Deputy Governor of the Central Bank, a move which has reinforced expectations that the bank will focus chiefly on inflation control. The choice of Mminele for this role is a clear sign that conservative economic policy has become firmly entrenched in the ANC and the left-wing elements of the alliance have been unsuccessful in pushing their economic agenda. Mminele has been a central banker for almost ten years, a member of the Monetary Policy Committee and the executive general of the financial markets division since 2005. Crucially, Mminele is well known to international investors. When asked his opinion on South Africa's monetary policy he said "the monetary policy framework that we've been pursuing has served the country well. As far as I'm concerned the adoption and implementation of inflation targeting has been a success".<sup>68</sup> The appointment is evidence that things will not change economically under Zuma, a reality that will not please the unions, who want more economic influence and have almost immediately demanded that their man (Ebrahim Patel) have more control over economic policy.<sup>69</sup>

In addition to steering a similar economic course to that of his predecessor, it looks initially as though his style of government will not deviate hugely from that set out by Mbeki. Under Mbeki, the gap between state and party was significantly eroded. This was not entirely Mbeki's fault, but was rather a consequence of the ANC's slow

<sup>65</sup> Linda Ensor, 2009. *Minister confident that SA will weather the economic storm*. [online] (updated on 11 June 2009) Available at: <http://www.businessday.co.za/Articles/Content.aspx?id=73112> [accessed on 11 June 2009].

<sup>66</sup> Carien du Plessis, 2009. *Works Minister defends Zuma's jobs target*. Published in South African newspaper Pretoria News on 10 June 2009.

<sup>67</sup> World News Australia, 2009. *Zuma vows no change to South Africa economic policy*. [online] (updated on 10 June 2009) Available at: <http://www.sbs.com.au/news/article/1026362/Zuma-vows-no-change-to-SAfrica-economic-policy> [accessed on 15 June 2009].

<sup>68</sup> Garth Theunissen and Nasreen Seria, 2009. *Mminele names as South Africa Central Bank Deputy*. [online] (updated on 9 June 2009) Available at:

<http://www.bloomberg.com/apps/news?pid=20601116&sid=aU9iN4Dfsw1U> [accessed on 17 June 2009].

<sup>69</sup> Zukile Majova, 2009. *Cosatu in fight for more clout*. [online] (updated on 10 June 2009) Available at: <http://www.sowetan.co.za/News/Article.aspx?id=1015002> [accessed on 12 June 2009].



transformation from a revolutionary movement to a governing party. As a result, the doctrine of National Democratic Revolution (NDR) required the ANC to seize control of the levers of power within the state, and place party officials in positions of significant power within the state. The problem for Mbeki was that when divisions arose within the party, they were transferred to the state and subsequently compromised the integrity of those institutions.<sup>70</sup>

The involvement of the judicial system in the ANC's presidential succession is a prime example of how such damage could be done. Mbeki undoubtedly used the National Prosecuting Authority (NPA) as a political tool to remove Zuma from party and state office, by having him prosecuted for corruption charges over an arms deal. However, the zeal of the head of the NPA, Visi Pikoli, in the investigation of this arms deal threatened to incriminate more people than just Zuma. When in October 2007, Pikoli obtained a warrant for the arrest of the national chief of police and close personal friend of Mbeki, Jackie Selebi on multiple corruption charges, Mbeki had him immediately removed. This reinforced claims that Zuma and his allies had already been making; that the NPA's and the Scorpions' (the investigative arm of the NPA) independence had been undermined and that the president was driving the campaign to prosecute Zuma. These complaints culminated in September 2008 when a high court ruled that amongst other things the NPA's independence had been compromised by political interference.<sup>71</sup> This decision was later reversed on appeal, but the damage was done.

Such manipulation of state institutions for political ends was a characteristic of Mbeki's presidency and served to undermine public confidence and trust in the presidency and the state. However, it appears that Zuma intends to continue with this approach, with Jeff Radebe, the Justice Minister, postponing interviews for the Justice Service Commission (JSC). The JSC - which interviews and makes recommendations to the president for suitable appointments to the bench - consists of 24 members, four of whom are appointed by the president. It seems likely that the current presidential appointees will be removed and the new candidate's selected will be affiliated with controversial Chief Justice candidate and current Western Cape Judge President John Hlophe, who has accused the JSC of bias against him in its handling of the inquiry into allegations that he improperly tried to influence the Constitutional Court to rule in favour of Zuma.<sup>72</sup> Although, officials insist this is all legal, it seems possible that this may be an attempt by Zuma to not only have his own criminal proceedings put to bed for good, but also to add the justice system to his political armoury. Furthermore, it appears that the disbanded Scorpions, which many believed was being directly controlled by Mbeki, will be re-established under the new name Directorate of Priority Crime Investigations (DPCI). Currently 800 recruits, many of them former Scorpions' members, are being vetted for security clearance.<sup>73</sup>

---

<sup>70</sup> Roger Southall, 2008. *Thabo Mbeki's fall: the ANC and South Africa's democracy*. [online] (updated on 13 October 2008) Available at: <http://www.opendemocracy.net/article/thabo-mbekis-fall-the-anc-and-south-africas-democracy> [accessed on 16 June 2009].

<sup>71</sup> Ibid.

<sup>72</sup> Mpumelelo Mkhabela, 2009. *Is Radebe paving way for Zuma appointees*. [online] (updated on 14 June) Available at: <http://www.thetimes.co.za/PrintEdition/Article.aspx?id=1017541> [accessed on 14 June 2009].

<sup>73</sup> Christelle Terreblanche, 2009. *Minister poised to name Head of new Scorpions-style Unit*. Published in South African newspaper The Star on 21 May 2009. Source: <http://www.security.co.za/fullStory.asp?NewsId=12514>

## Summary

Over the last 4 years Jacob Zuma has been forced to scrap for his political survival, in the law courts and in the political arena. He will undoubtedly continue to savour the sweet taste of his presidential victory, but he will know that the real fight starts now. Very soon, he will have to start making some tough decisions for the good of the country, which may mean going against the perceived interests of some of his supporters. His promise to clamp down on corruption, laziness and incompetence within the government and civil service through the creation of the new performance monitoring and evaluation ministry may mean that he will be forced to remove allies in order to stay true to his promises. He will have to decide what is more important: his political security or the country's wellbeing.

Sooner or later Zuma will also be forced to tackle the unions. There is no doubt, Zuma is not a leftist and has never been one whilst in office. He served as Mbeki's deputy for the best part of 6 years and never opposed his economic policy. His alliance with the left was one of convenience and the promises he made to tackle poverty were the actions of a pragmatist, who knew the best way to advance his political career. Despite what the unions think, Zuma has insisted from the outset that he does not owe anybody anything and that government appointees would be based on merit, not loyalty, a statement which COSATU described as "a declaration of war".<sup>74</sup> Ultimately it is the ANC and Zuma (but to what extent remains unknown) who are driving policy and will continue to do so. According to one analyst, over the course of the last few years, "COSATU has successfully won access to the corridors of power but this does not mean they will win power".<sup>75</sup>

The outcome of this is that the immediate future could see the unions throwing their weight about and initiating strikes to build pressure on the government. Indeed President Zuma has already urged COSATU to be more supportive to the government in a backhanded criticism at the World Economic Forum in Cape Town. However, there could be more significant long term problems for Zuma. The disparity between what his government will offer and the expectations of the millions of South Africans who voted for him because they believed in his promises of more jobs and better services has the potential to lead to social conflict. And even if Zuma has the intention to deliver, he will be severely hamstrung by the current climate and may see his "promises melt in the global economic heat".<sup>76</sup>

With his charismatic persona and his ANC pedigree, Zuma does offer a new approach to his predecessor. He is a more likeable and approachable man who will win friends more easily. However, it remains doubtful that he offers a political alternative to Mbeki. He remains very much the acceptable smiling, handshaking, dancing, Zulu face of the ANC's conservative policy. However, if things continue as they are, the old divisions that existed under Mbeki and appeared to have healed under Zuma may begin to emerge once more.

---

<sup>74</sup> Economist, 2009. *Payback Time*. [online] (updated on 11 June 2009) Available at: [http://www.economist.com/world/mideast-africa/displaystory.cfm?story\\_id=13834140](http://www.economist.com/world/mideast-africa/displaystory.cfm?story_id=13834140) [accessed on 15 June 2009].

<sup>75</sup> Adam Habib, Political Analyst at the University of Johannesburg, quoted in Zukile Majova, 2009. *Cosatu in fight for more clout*. [online] (updated on 10 June 2009) Available at: <http://www.sowetan.co.za/News/Article.aspx?id=1015002> [accessed on 12 June 2009].

<sup>76</sup> Sandile Memela, 2009. *Zuma's policies melt in the global economic heat*. [online] (updated on 17 June 2009) Available at: <http://www.thoughtleader.co.za/sandilememela/2009/06/17/zumas-melting-promises-in-the-global-economic-heat/> [accessed on 17 June 2009].

## CONCLUSIONS

There is no doubt that Zuma holds the people's mandate. He exudes confidence amongst the grassroots of ANC support and by and large is seen by them as the man to answer their prayers. However, his tendency to play to the hopes and fears of whichever crowd he happens to be addressing, and his inability to "articulate a clear vision"<sup>77</sup>, have generated concerns among the elite that he lacks the decisiveness required of a president. Much has been made of the role of other centres of power in driving government, specifically the Cabinet and the ANC. There are concerns that Gwede Mantashe, the Secretary-General of the ANC has too great an influence on government. Furthermore, whilst Trevor Manuel's new role in the Cabinet has allayed fears of South Africa's foreign investors, it remains to be seen what his role exactly involves. Zuma sees Manuel as his number one ally and turns to him for advice on all matters relating to the economy.<sup>78</sup> There are fears that if Zuma becomes too subservient to these two men, a power struggle could emerge within the ANC, splitting it again and further damaging the credibility of the presidency.<sup>79</sup>

Currently South Africa finds itself in an economic bind; worldwide recession, major commitment to hosting the World Cup in 2010 and a population that not only wants but actually believes that Zuma and his government can help them. Expectations are higher than ever and his honeymoon period is already reaching its conclusion. He may be able to buy more time given the current recession, however, delivery of the promises he made before becoming president is eagerly anticipated. There are signs that patience is already wearing thin as can be seen by the constant threat of strike action and vocal expressions of discontent from COSATU. His leftist allies in the coalition are slowly realising, given the minor roles they have been assigned within the cabinet, that Zuma's victory was not necessarily a victory for the left.

As it stands there is no indication that Zuma intends to deviate significantly from the economic policies of his predecessors. He knows that South Africa relies too heavily on foreign investment and his role is to maintain a suitable environment for it. Consequently, this policy could alienate much of his support base within the alliance and at the grassroots, to whom he made substantial promises, that now it appears he has little ability to keep. This leaves him very little room for manoeuvre and gives an explanation for his noncommittal approach. One could say that whatever direction he takes South Africa in, he risks jeopardising her economic prosperity or disappointing a long-suffering electorate.

The bitter struggle between Mbeki and Zuma tarnished the integrity of the presidency and compromised public trust in state institutions. As well as this, Zuma's personal credibility on the international stage has been diminished, as a result of his controversial corruption charges. Domestically, however, a recent poll suggested that 50% of people polled stated that they were more likely to vote for the

---

<sup>77</sup> Sasha Polakow-Suransky and Eusebius McKaiser, 2009. *South Africa will survive Zuma*. [online] (updated on 18 April 2009) Available at: <http://www.newsweek.com/id/194606> [accessed on 25 June 2009].

<sup>78</sup> Mail & Guardian, 2009. *Who's the boss? Manuel vs Mantashe*. [online] (updated on 19 June 2009) Available at: <http://www.mg.co.za/article/2009-06-19-whos-the-boss-manuel-vs-mantashe> [accessed on 21 June 2009].

<sup>79</sup> The ANC already suffered a split last year when supporters of Mbeki quit the party and set up the Congress of the People (COPE).

ANC because of the (unfair) charges brought against Zuma.<sup>80</sup> There may be a number of reasons for this: firstly that morality is not a voting issue for a large proportion of the South African electorate. This can be attributed to a lack of education and minimal understanding as to what constitutes 'correct practice'. Secondly, as has been mentioned above, after years of empty promises, voters are concerned with delivery. Zuma's guilt or innocence is a secondary issue.

Ultimately, Zuma is a pragmatist and it would seem he formed alliances based on necessity rather than ideology. The consequences of this are yet to be determined but early indications are that economic policy will not deviate. Of equal concern is the blurring of party and state as shown by the increasing influence of the ANC on the office of the presidency and the continuing inclination of ANC leaders to use public institutions to fight their political battles. Zuma finds himself at a crossroads and like most politicians he may well choose the well-trodden path of least resistance. However, he will soon find that taking the easy option may come at a price. Man of the hour he may be for now, but time will only too quickly tell if he truly is the man for the moment.

---

<sup>80</sup> Mmanaledi Mataboge, Mandy Rossouw and Matuma Letsoalo, 2009. *What the ANC victory means*. [online] (updated on 17 April) Available at: <http://www.mg.co.za/article/2009-04-17-what-the-ancs-victory-means> [accessed on 25 June 2009].

### **Disclaimer**

The views expressed in this paper are entirely and solely those of the author and do not necessarily reflect official thinking and policy either of Her Majesty's Government or of the Ministry of Defence.

ISBN 978-1-905962-70-9





**Published By:**

**Defence Academy of the**  
**United Kingdom**

**Research & Assessment Branch**

Defence Academy of the UK  
Block D, JSCSC  
Shrivenham  
SN6 8TS  
England

Telephone: (44) 1793 788743

Fax: (44) 1793 788287

Email: [R&ABTeam.hq@da.mod.uk](mailto:R&ABTeam.hq@da.mod.uk)

<http://www.da.mod.uk/r-and-a-b>

**ISBN 978-1-905962-70-9**