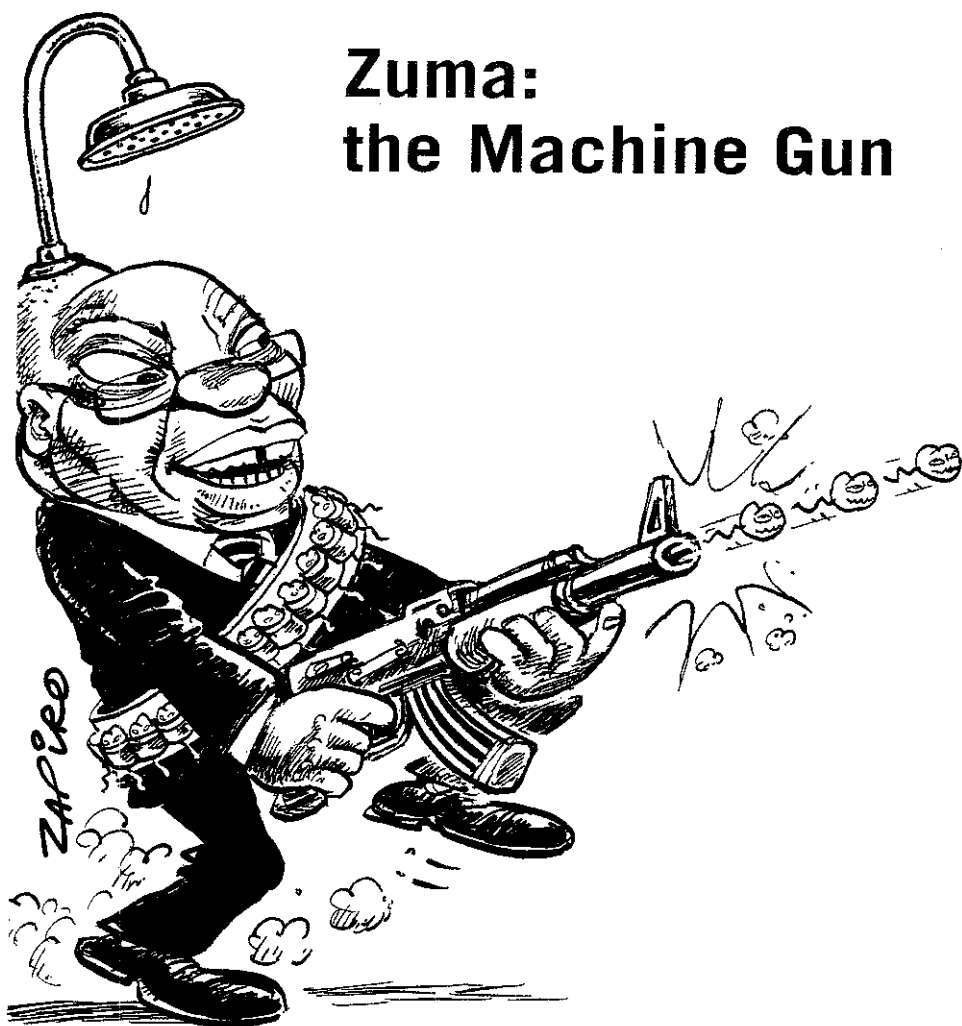


Zuma: the Machine Gun



If JZ is not going to jail, he's definitely the chap to watch... the only way you'll stop him is to charge him, one panelist stated.

As far as Zuma is concerned there are a number of intangible factors on the upside — the sympathy vote for the perceived underdog; the suspicion that his forced resignation was the political equivalent of an "unfair dismissal" in the context of ongoing damaging allegations aimed at others in the new arms deal probes in Germany and the United Kingdom, over which the South African government will have little control. Furthermore, it seems that Zuma is the quintessential survivor — one panelist described him as a Teflon phenomenon: "... anything that gets chucked at this guy just bounces back".

As another observed: "People say that what Mbeki has shown is a

commitment against corruption. But the inconsistencies have made people feel it seems to be personal, it's not political."

Zuma is seen as very senior in the party, with a solid MK pedigree and a clear affinity with ordinary people. He has been willing to go back to the party structure and say "I'm sorry" — a quality most people admire in a leader. According to one panelist, Zuma is seen as a charming and charismatic candidate despite various gaffes both inside and outside the court.

Importantly, the panel noted that Zuma's constituency is not merely ethnically-based. He has a crossover appeal and carries the ANC Youth League and the Young Communist League as supporters.

In the candid view of a panelist: "... there are four serious con-

tenders here, and one of them is going to be president of the ANC and president of the country... it's either going to be the current president or it's going to be Jacob Zuma, or it's going to be Kgalema, or it's going to be Tokyo and it's all going to be decided on pedigree and based on experience... Zuma is up there among the ANC veterans and has a very strong chance of making it. However, should Thabo stand and should Zuma be the one who's there alone, there's a very big likelihood that they would go for Tokyo or Kgalema. And it seems to me that this is where the game is going to be played."

Other panelists also referred to Zuma's impeccable struggle credentials, with one pointing out that Zuma is not necessarily a populist: "... People very often refer to him as a populist because he's got a lot of popular support, but if you look at his history, he's not a populist. I think he's a fairly strict, also, almost like Motlanthe, a politically disciplined man rather than a disciplinarian. If you look at the history of what he managed to do in KwaZulu-Natal just before '94 (and he was rewarded for that), but it seems to me, people sometimes read him wrong. I think he will be much less populist than we think he will be should he become president."

On the downside, it is clear that much of the pro-Zuma movement has related less to positive support for him than to an expression of opposition to Mbeki. Zuma is viewed in contradistinction to Mbeki and may draw too extensively on the conspiracy theory dividend.

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Lekota: the Rainbow Reconciler

weight within the party necessary to be its president, while others expressed concern that he does not present a particular direction for the party. Still others raised concerns about ethics — Lekota was one of those investigated by the Public Protector and Parliament's Ethics Committee for not disclosing assets in the Register of Members' Interests — issues ominously similar to those that dogged Jacob Zuma while he was still in Parliament. Some

argued that some ANC elements still bear grudges against Lekota for exchanging his black consciousness stance for a non-racial one. While his cross-racial appeal may therefore be important for the country, it may count against him within the party.

On balance, the panel believed that Lekota is a serious contender as a compromise candidate in the absence of a "grand bargain" with a different compromise candidate such as, for

example, Cyril Ramaphosa or Tokyo Sexwale. He was therefore slotted into a "second-tier" compromise category, with a possible further stint as party chairperson or deputy president of the party in the offing. In a different scenario, which pits Kgalema Motlanthe against him, the panel foresees a fierce contest in which Lekota is likely to emerge as secretary general. The panel raised the question — "does he want the job?". □

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Ramaphosa: the People's Mogul

more broad-based deals, as well as harnessing personal wealth for societal upliftment. There is no reason why Cyril Ramaphosa cannot emulate Bill Gates in this regard. The key question is whether he wants the

job, and whether he will be willing to play "below the belt", which is the stuff of democratic politics — a willingness to take the blows and return them when needed, and a willingness to "plot" if necessary.

On balance, the panel of analysts agreed that Cyril Ramaphosa is a very serious candidate, but noted that his own dreams, desires and thoughts about the ANC presidency remain elusive. □

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Sexwale: Not the Apprentice

The fact that his presence within ANC structures has not been felt as strongly since he left public office, a factor exploited by Motlanthe in his attack, may become important if the race turns on who can marshal the party structure better and with greater influence in the absence of a grand bargain. Whereas Cyril

Ramaphosa has remained on the NEC, Sexwale is merely an ordinary member of the party. The fact that he has not been involved in key strategic party decisions for many years could militate against him.

Panelists pointed out that in the case of both Sexwale and Ramaphosa an attempt may be made to turn the

debate into one about which class rules in the ANC, implying that people who are successful in business cease to live ANC traditions.

The panel had no doubt that Tokyo Sexwale will be a serious contender, depending on what happens between the "first-" and "second-tier" competitions. □

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Zuma: the Machine Gun

Zuma's relationship with Schabir Shaik, apart from the ongoing prospect of corruption charges being reinstated, has raised serious questions about his judgement. Furthermore, he could easily be embroiled in court challenges for much of this year, given various cases pending before the courts. The most crucial

question is undoubtedly one of ethics. All other opponents in the race will have vital ammunition as the court cases drag on, attacking him for corruption, excessive spending, and dubious "financial advice" from Schabir Shaik, a convicted fraudster. While the ANC Women's League was fairly silent during the rape trial, it is uncer-

tain what the female delegates on the congress floor will do with their votes. This could be a wild card if Zuma survives for the duration of the race.

Barring the legal process removing Zuma from contention, the panel agreed that he remains a serious, if not the most serious, contender for the presidency of the ANC. □