

A cabinet reshuffle equals a nuclear deal

President Jacob Zuma's latest cabinet reshuffle is nothing more than a thinly-veiled smokescreen to get his crony, David Mahlobo into the energy portfolio to push through the nuclear deal with Russia. Thereby depositing a hefty chunk of change into the president's retirement fund.

 By Nicci Botha 18 Oct 2017



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"It is well known that David Mahlobo has a close relationship to the president's nuclear ambitions, which is deeply concerning. The fact that this announcement comes only months before the much-awaited Integral Resource Plan and Integrated Energy Plan are due to be finalised, means that vested interests and the protection of the nuclear agenda are clearly playing a role in cabinet appointments. Penny-Jane Cooke, Greenpeace Africa climate and energy campaigner says.

"This is nothing less than a dysfunctional power play, and is generating a situation where the instability creates even more opportunities for corruption. Greenpeace Africa condemns any actions aimed at protecting an obscure nuclear deal in the strongest possible terms."

Guess who's going to make a lot of money?

There are strong rumours that Russian nuclear agency Rosatom is the front-runner to win the nuclear contract. Mahlobo was one of a small entourage which accompanied Zuma on a visit to Russia earlier this year, where the president met privately with Russian president, Vladimir Putin. The meeting was presumably about the nuclear deal, which has been stalled by legal action by Greenpeace and the South African Faith Communities' Environment Institute.

So how will Zuma benefit personally from the whole deal? Well, his son, Duduzane, and his close friends, the Guptas, through their Oakbay company, own a uranium mine, Dominion Rietkuil Uranium (renamed Shi Uranium). When they bought it a few years ago, the mining industry was laughing up their collective sleeve because although it was a very rich deposit, the mine was known to be a dud. So, guess what fuel a nuclear power plant needs? Guess who owns a very big uranium deposit? Guess who's going to make a lot of money if the nuclear deal goes through?

ABOUT NICCI BOTHA

Nicci Botha has been wordsmithing for more than 20 years, covering just about every subject under the sun and then some. She's strung together words on sustainable development, maritime matters, mining, marketing, medical, lifestyle... and that elixir of life - chocolate. Nicci has worked for local and international media houses including Primedia, Caxton, Lloyd's and Reuters. Her new passion is digital media.
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