

ZIMBABWE

POLITICAL ECONOMY

REVIEW

Mugabe's Cabinet Reshuffle - Power, Patronage and Greed

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The 9th of October Cabinet reshuffle – a Mnangagwa management scheme – can be understood in the context of the current intra-ZANU-PF dis cohesion and a trinity of interwoven matrices in President Robert Mugabe’s struggle to capture ZANU-PF and 2018 elections – greed, power and patronage.



Source: *The Herald* 9 October 2017

A critical analysis of the destooled, revised and enthroned cabinet ministers shows that, Mugabe attempts to dispel fears that he is no longer in control of ZANU-PF and effects thereof, heighten uncertainties among internal party enemies that he can still unmake them with the same ease he felt when making them, put his presidential stamp on the G40 faction as the anointed faction while making sure he doesn’t lose the state machinery necessary for remaining power.

The real and immediate challenge to the longevity of President Mugabe’s rule is Vice President Emerson Mnangagwa who, as Grace Mugabe testified, has caused him “to sleep with one eye open” whereas, the opposition being the second. Capturing

ZANU-PF, state machinery and winning the 2018 election is the actual challenge to Robert Mugabe to which the reshuffle has been the first remedy. So, the reshuffle was manufactured to “manage” Mnangagwa and show his followers and anybody in ZANU-PF where power lies, capture strategic state machinery and create an electioneering hand ahead of the 2018 elections.

How has the Mnangagwa management scheme been executed through this reshuffle? Firstly, the reshuffle has confused the securocrat syndicate which wields an overwhelming share in Mnangagwa’s force majeure. By destooling Emerson Mnangagwa in the Ministry of Justice, Legal and Parliamentary Affairs and replacing him with a securocrat CIO Director-General retired General Happyton Bonyongwe, President Mugabe displayed serious judo mastery: (i) cutting the enemy’s source of power. The Ministry of Justice and Parliamentary Affairs since 2014 has saved as serious institutional power used by Mnangagwa, i.e using it and parliament to amend the constitution so if he becomes president, he can appoint Team Lacoste to the Chief Justice and Deputy Chief Justice positions and rely on them to persecute enemies to manage his political foes both within and without the party and the state generally; (ii) replacing Mnangagwa with Bonyongwe is a classic example of strategic killing of two birds with one stone – a double dose carrot and stick (appointment to disappoint) and divide and rule machinations. The latter

“manages” Mnangagwa in that: it has partly weakened his securocrat powerbase by co-opting Bonyongwe through awarding him Mnangagwa’s ministerial post whilst creating distrust among him and his fellow generals for dining with G40. It is yet unclear whether Bonyongwe will be retired as CIO director general. If he does, this means he has been appointed to be disappointed; he is the first modality of Mugabe’s promise to retire rogue Generals and reduced to a mere minister without constituency – thus serving at the mercy of Robert Mugabe who will destool him to a general citizen anytime if he feels his loyalty has warned.



Source: The Herald 11 October 2017 President Mugabe poses for a photograph with his deputies Emmerson Mnangagwa (left) and Phelekezela Mphoko, newly appointed ministers Thokozile Mathuthu (far right), Chiratidzo Mabuwa (far left), Edgar Mbwembwe (back row), retired Major-General Happyton Bonyongwe, Webster Shamu, Paul Chimedza and Chief Secretary to the President and cabinet Dr Misheck Sibanda, after the swearing in ceremony at State House,



Left: Outgoing Minister of Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Emmerson Mnangagwa. Right: Newly appointed Minister of Justice Happyton Bonyongwe

If he continues double dipping in the security sector and the cabinet, this means he has been lured to Mugabe to handle Mnangagwa and use the Ministry of Justice role in ZEC to allow CIOs to manage 2018 elections in a manner favourable to G40 and sabotage internal and external enemies. By this gesture, President Mugabe has sent a clear message to the rest of the Team Lacoste generals – that, they are removable and should obey while His grace lasts. Observers of external elections will be accredited by CIOs.

Capturing the War veteran constituency is important to ZANU-PF’s ability to win elections and maintain internal cohesion. Retired Colonel Tshinga Dube has failed to do this job, he has actually smoked from the same pipe with Team Lacoste; calling for a successor was a final exposure. Hence, he has been destooled. Undesirable war veterans led by Christopher Mutsvangwa have continued vitriol against Robert Mugabe. Replacing him with a vassal failed Tsholotsho war veteran-cum-politician Cain Mathema is but a quest to find the best puppet among war veterans. Since his dismal defeat by

Mtoliki Sibanda as MP for Tsholotsho in 2000, Mathema has been a proud beneficiary of Robert Mugabe's patronage network, awarded political appointments to sustain his loyalty and dependency on the president for survival. The current move is meant to divide the war veteran constituency behind Mnangagwa and, only God knows how a failed politician like Mathema will do any better than Tshinga. Only better bootlicking of G40 is thinkable and through Matema as the face of War Veterans, Mugabe's (and Grace's) unchallenged power is assured through serious patronage gamesmanship executed in the War Veterans Ministry.

The revision of Obert Mpofu's duty and assigning him to the Home Affairs Ministry in charge of the police (their intoxicating role against political enemies and their lucrative roadblock resources) is an a clear evidence of Mugabe's pursuit of patronage, power and greed as a priority over quality of government. Minister Mpofu presided over the Ministry of Mines and Mineral Development when the USD 15billion worth of diamond proceeds disappeared, he finished the rail transport when he got to that Ministry but President Robert Mugabe has continuously retained him in cabinet. He has a serious history of alleged corruption practices and refined bootlicking. It is the same Obert Mpofu who eloped from PF-ZAPU to ZANU towards independence days and after suffering a trail of opposition defeat in his home area, he caved his constituency known as uMguza today, villages settled

by ZANU-PF register. Remaining a ZANU-PF candidate in uMguza depends on doing as Mugabe says as his stay in cabinet has been. It is beyond reasonable doubt that he is doing a satisfying job for the President as evidenced by his ever presence in cabinet despite his corruption record. He is there to capture the police and its revenue generated through various road fines to finance and assist in the 2018 election. Opponents to Robert Mugabe are assured persecution by the police statecraft in Mpofu's hands. This will also "manage" Mnangagwa's ability to access the police machinery to do "corruption investigations and persecutions "of G40.

The Finance Ministry is the most important ministry when it comes to the power of the purse. Loyal people are kept in that area. Ignatious Chombo, apart from being Robert Mugabe's loyal homeboy, has been associated with leading failed ministries. It will be foolhardy to think his appointment has anything to do with the ailing economy that Patrick Chinamasa has dismally failed to handle. Chombo cannot do anything better than Chinamasa except managing state resources for the party and First Family as well as bootlicking. Thus, he is there as a loyal patronage conduit of President Mugabe and his family who will religiously deploy economic resources to Robert Mugabe's election whilst giving "targeted sanctions" to internal and external enemies including Team Lacoste. The complains by Professor Jonathan Moyo in the 2013

campaign that he was a victim of “targeted sanctions” from Mujuru faction are a pointer to Mnangagwa and his faction that sanctions are used. This switching of individuals was meant to make panicking people feel like something is being done about the economy whilst in reality being a political maneuver to control capture strategic ministries. Patrick Zhuwawo’s move to the Ministry of Labour is another strategic economic position of power captured by President Mugabe and his wife. The contentious ZANU-PF youths who have met hardship in their enlisting on government payroll have gotten their problem solved.



Minster of public Service, Labour and Social Welfare; Patrick Zhuwawo

Zhuwao will also manage resources of the national cash cow; the National Social Security Authority which controls millions of pensions funds that. Zhuwao being Mugabe’s loyal nephew will be useful in financing the ZANU-POF youth militia in the coming 2018 election and using his position to sabotage Team Lacoste youth. Most significant to note is Minister Saviur Kasukuwere’s new

appointment as Minister of Local Government, Rural Development and National Housing. Kasukuwere is the Political Commissar of ZANU PF responsible for party organization and state of party structures. This dual control of party and government structures to the lowest levels is critical when it comes to the contestation for power among different factions of the party. The ministry has access to dish patronage goods such as houses, land and control resources and assignment of party cadres in key local as well as government projects in rural areas.

The case of Minister Simon Khaya Moyo’s appointment to the Ministry of Media, Information and Broadcasting Services is not separate from Mugabe’s quest to recapture the state propaganda machinery. It is he who was formerly called a Joice Mujuru faction and allegedly saved by a sleeve by Professor Jonathan Moyo from being ejected. He is therefore expected to reciprocate this favour to G40 in his new assignment. ZBC has been source of power for Team Lacoste (particularly through its permanent secretary), broadcasting critical content about Jonathan Moyo in particular and a stumbling block to the G40 faction. Its capture was therefore expected. Its management will yield results in Mugabe’s bid to stay in power, control every powerful institution on the land and destroy enemies through this ministry of propaganda.

Conclusion

The cabinet reshuffle is therefore a representation of continuous elite capture of the political economy and reconfiguration of power and patronage in both party and state focusing strategically to preserve the political power and economic interests of President Mugabe and his family. Most critically it sends clear messages that President Mugabe is control and that Vice President Mnangagwa is being managed and watched.