

# US Sponsored “Regime Change” in Asia and Africa: Five Things that Ethiopia and Myanmar’s Leadership Changes Have in Common

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*An ordinary person might not think that Ethiopia and Myanmar have anything in common, but an analysis of their latest leadership changes shows that these two Chinese Silk Road partners actually share five structural vulnerabilities with one another, and identifying these points of pressure could reveal some crucial insight about the US’ latest Hybrid War plans in the New Cold War.*

The past month has seen the formal leaders of Ethiopia and Myanmar resign from their posts, with Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn [stepping down](#) at the end of February and President Htin Kyaw [doing so](#) in the middle of this week, respectively. On the surface, these two events on opposite ends of the [Afro-“Indian” Ocean](#) appear to have nothing to do with one another, nor would an ordinary person think that these countries have anything in common whatsoever, but these peaceful “regime changes” actually reveal five structural vulnerabilities afflicting both Ethiopia and Myanmar. Identifying these points of pressure is more than just an academic exercise, however, since it could provide some crucial insight into the US’ latest [Hybrid War strategies](#) that it’s employing against these two Chinese Silk Road partners in the latest stage of the [New Cold War](#).

Image on the right: PM Hailemariam Desalegn

## 1. Figurehead/Symbolic Leaders



Ethiopia watchers know that the country’s Prime Minister is mostly a figurehead for the powerful Ethiopian People’s Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF, modelled off of the Chinese Communist Party) that rules the country behind the scenes, with the real decision-making competencies of the state reportedly resting in the hands of the party’s Tigrayan minority elite who are supposedly deeply entrenched in the military-security services.

Something similar can be said about the Myanmar President, since he too is a symbolic leader who merely acts as a stand-in for powerful military interests, though it should be mentioned in the same vein that unelected “State Counsellor” Suu Kyi also wields disproportionate influence, though she too has lately come to be considered as more of a military instrument than the independent power center that she previously was thought to be in her own right.

## 2. Deep State Divisions

There's [speculation](#) that Premier Desalegn resigned because of growing rifts within the EPRDF between its de-facto Tigrayan coalition leader and the front's Amhara & Oromo "junior" partners. While no such rumors have yet to arise in Myanmar, there have been clear signs that foreign forces endeavor to drive a wedge between the civilian government and its military backers, the stress of which might have contributed to President Htin Kyaw's recent resignation.

### 3. Escalating Unrest

Ethiopia has been in an [off-and-on state of Hybrid War unrest](#) for nearly the past 18 months as its largest ethnic group of the [Oromo violently agitated](#) against the government on the pretext of defending their communal land rights from the state's "eminent domain" encroachment, and other disturbances that have since sprung up with the country's second-largest ethnic group of the Amhara and geographically expansive one of the Somalis are thought to have contributed to the aforementioned deep state divisions.



By the same token, Myanmar has been beset by Hybrid War violence in recent months as a result of ["Rohingya" "rebel"-terrorist groups wreaking havoc](#) in the country's northwestern Rakhine State along the Bangladeshi border, with this sudden conflict prompting the military to decisively intervene and in turn trigger a flurry of international condemnation, some of which may have succeeded in pressuring members of the civilian government such as the president into distancing themselves from the former junta and resigning out of unstated protest over what happened.

### 4. Federalization

Ethiopia is officially a federation but the manner in which it functions has given rise to accusations that it's really just a thinly disguised centralized state, with this claim being used as the basis (whether rightly or wrongly) for "justifying" the recent ethno-regional violence in the country that purports to be motivated by a desire to "reform" the system through "decentralization".

Myanmar, on the other hand, is a centralized state that's formally moving towards "federalization" per what's been called the "Panglong 2.0" or "21<sup>st</sup>-century Panglong" process in honor of its pre-independence powwow that previously decentralized the country

prior to the 1962 military coup, and the “Rohingya” issue is yet another ethno-regional conflict that adds credence to the argument that “federalization” is the only sustainable “political solution” to Myanmar’s many problems.

## 5. Silk Road Connectivity

The Chinese-built Djibouti-Addis Ababa Railway (DAAR) could easily be called “Africa’s [CPEC](#)” because of its strategic importance to the People’s Republic, which among other things connects the Asian Great Power to its top continental partner that also doubles as [one of the world’s fastest-growing economies](#).

Myanmar, for its part, hosts the Chinese-built port of Kyaukphyu which is expected to function as the terminal point for a forthcoming “China-Myanmar Economic Corridor” (CMEC) that will run parallel to the two oil and gas pipelines that already transit the country en route to Yunnan Province.

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## “Containing China”

The common thread connecting these five structural vulnerabilities together in each of these two countries and between them is that the US can exploit them individually or altogether in order to contribute to the Hybrid War “containment” of China. The external aggravation of preexisting identity conflicts within each of these two geostrategic transit states along the New Silk Road is comparatively easy for the US to pull off and cost-effectively pays for itself many times over if it succeeds in catalyzing a situation of “[scenario superiority](#)” whereby manufactured crises become “self-sustaining”.

Ethiopia and Myanmar are both “[National Democracies](#)”, though this relatively more stable form of government has nevertheless been [weaponized by foreign forces](#) in order to tear apart their [nation-states](#) via “[Identity Federalism](#)” (“Bosnification”), all with the intent of creating a checkerboard of quasi-independent statelets through which the US can then exert influence along each country’s crucial Silk Road corridors. The challenge that both countries face is in simultaneously managing their “grassroots” pressure and deep state divisions as they progressively “reform” their systems, taking care not to drag their heels in this regard but also not to move too fast either.

The latest leadership changes in Ethiopia and Myanmar indicate that there are serious problems behind the scenes in both states and that the US’ Hybrid War campaigns have worked to the extent that they’ve begun to produce visible results in shaking up the state of affairs in both countries. China will need to assist its partners as needed if it’s to ensure the strategic security of its Silk Road transit routes and not surrender them to American proxy influence, but therein lays the danger because Beijing will also have to avoid falling into the US’ “mission creep” trap as it navigates the latest turns in the New Cold War.

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