

Color Revolutions? Is Southern Africa About To Be Shaken Up By Hybrid War?

Part I

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Region: [sub-Saharan Africa](#)

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Commonly thought of as a bastion of peace and stability in the continent ever since the turn of the century, the southern part of Africa is once more returning to the spotlight of global attention. Zimbabwean officials have [alleged](#) that the American and French embassies are behind the latest Color Revolution commotion in the country, stating that their ambassadors even met with the movement's newest leader, Pastor Evan Mawarire, before he began his [campaign](#).

This accusation is echoed by regional leader South Africa, which [described](#) the latest tumult as “sponsored elements seeking regime change”. If the US succeeds in its latest Color Revolution plot, then the collapse of [Resistant & Defiant](#) Zimbabwe could be the tripwire for automatically setting into motion a preplanned sequence of other destabilizations that might rapidly spread throughout the neighboring countries, thereby returning Southern Africa back to its Cold War-era of conflict and unexpectedly turning it into the New Cold War's latest battleground.

An Irresistible Target

Harare has always been very close to [Moscow](#) and especially [Beijing](#), and this [trilateral relationship](#) has only intensified in the past couple of years. China [openly stated](#) that Africa is a priority area of its foreign policy and that its relationship with the continent is integral to the country's sustainable 21st-century economic growth. The [\\$4 billion](#) that President Xi promised Zimbabwe during his December 2015 visit there is expected to form the cornerstone of their future relations and [yield tangible market benefits](#) for China, all in accordance with its African grand strategy. [Russia](#), just like China, also has many investments in the centrally positioned Southern African state, though they focus more on [minerals](#) and [military equipment](#) than on the real-sector economy. Still, when taken together in the complementary context of the [Russian-Chinese Strategic Partnership](#), Moscow and Beijing's combined interests in Zimbabwe have made it an irresistible target for Washington's covert campaign.

More broadly speaking, the region of Southern Africa is internationally known for having the [most developed](#) infrastructure networks – a key component of China's One Belt One Road global vision of connectivity – and a relatively [skilled](#) labor force in comparison to the rest of Africa, thus also explaining why many companies rely on this part of the continent as their access point to the rest of it. The high level of physical connectivity between the Southern African states means that people and products can move throughout the lower half of the [Southern African Development Community](#) with ease, and while this might be a

boon for business, it also inherently carries with it very serious security risks if something goes dangerously wrong in one of these states and insurgent and weapons start moving cross-border instead. Because of the economic importance that many global players attach to Southern Africa – China first and foremost among them – and the real risk that they could all be adversely impacted by the American-directed regime change operation in Zimbabwe, it's relevant to analyze the situation in depth and prognosticate some of its most likely consequences.

New Year, Same Strategy

Zimbabwe's economic and political woes aren't anything new, and their present manifestation is actually the evolution of a years-long policy of hostility that the US has been practicing against it. From the implementation of [sanctions](#) in the early 2000s to the first [Color Revolution attempt in 2008](#), the US has been persistently trying to undermine President Mugabe for both for the sake of unseating a multipolar leader and because of the regional contagion effect of instability that the Zimbabwean state's collapse could trigger. Economic warfare against the country was responsible for historic hyperinflation rates of [231 million percent](#) in late-2008, the timing of which was by no means a coincidence. Inflation had been exponentially multiplying in the run-up to the general election in March of that year and the second round that was eventually held in June, and the economic difficulties that Zimbabweans were forced to experience were manufactured by the US in a bid to break the population's support for the government.

"Opposition" rival Morgan Tsvangirai was ultimately unsuccessful in toppling the government, though Mugabe eventually had to [concede](#) to a form of 'Regime Tweaking' in appointing him as his Prime Minister. This post was specifically created in order to deal with the Color Revolution crisis and was abolished immediately after the American proxy's term was up, but during that four-year time, the US hoped to use Tsvangirai to weaken the government from within and subvert its sovereignty-exercising plans to integrate Zimbabwe within the emerging multipolar world order. It's clear that the US has been [waging asymmetrical warfare on Zimbabwe for years already](#), and in fact, many of the lessons that it learned throughout this drawn-out operation have presently been applied to Venezuela as well. Furthermore, the riotous disturbances that are rocking the South American country right now have correspondingly proved to be invaluable lessons for the Color Revolutionaries in Zimbabwe, further demonstrating yet another example of interlinked continuity in the US' indirect adaptive approach to regime change, or [Hybrid War](#).

Perfecting Timing

The latest outbreak of Color Revolution violence was obviously being prepared for a while, but the dual events that prompted its commencement are the signs of an [internal power struggle](#) within the ruling ZANU-PF party and Mugabe's elderly age, with the latter inevitably leading to the former. The President himself has had to address these rumors [several times](#) over the past year, [chiding](#) his supposed 'allies' for already conniving about what they will do once he eventually dies. The [popular chatter](#) is that his wife Grace will pick up the reins and carry on her husband's legacy, but Tsvangirai has already come out [against](#) her possible candidacy and is rallying his supporters to oppose her if she chooses to run. With so much political uncertainty in the air, and the economy still in dire straits, the US saw the perfect structural opportunity for asymmetrically striking against the Zimbabwean state and thus revved up its Color Revolutionaries for the coming battle.

Coordinating The Color Revolution

Religion:

As it has been wont to do over the past couple of years in undermining targeted governments, the US is employing a syncretic approach in assembling as diverse of a crowd as possible to partake in the Zimbabwean Color Revolution. The figurehead who the US has designed to publicly lead this campaign is Pastor Evan Mawarire, and they purposely chose a religious representative in order to capitalize off of the [piousness](#) that pervades the country's population. Mawarire was [just arrested](#) by the authorities for inciting violence, but the US likely foresaw this event and has plenty of backup plans to exploit its proxy's 'official' 'religious' position in order to turn him into a Color Revolution martyr behind whom the anti-government crowds and their Western government backers can rally.

Economy:

Relatedly, most of the people who are organizing against the government aren't doing so for explicitly regime change purposes, but rather to allegedly protest against the country's deteriorating economic conditions and alleged police violence. Truth be told, they're likely well aware of how their participation feeds into this scenario, but because they're not publicly announcing it, they're able to hide behind a thin veneer of 'plausible deniability' when they're accused of being the US' "useful idiots". Admittedly, the government itself is responsible for mismanaging part of the country's economy in response to the US' disruptive aggression against it, and Mugabe made a major mistake in his 2000 "[land reform](#)" package that [ultimately](#) ended up [destroying](#) Zimbabwe's [agricultural sector](#), but these incidents in and of themselves should not normally be grounds for launching a violent 'protest' movement years after they first occurred.

What's plausibly occurring then isn't that some Zimbabweans had a years-long delayed reaction to what has happened to their country, but that these 'protests' are engineered by the US as the final form of economic warfare against the country designed to push the fragile system past the tipping point and into a tailspin of collapse. "[Stay-away day](#)", as the first themed protest was called at the beginning of the campaign, was more of a nationwide strike than a protest, and it was meant to instantly exacerbate the country's economic turmoil and grind society to a halt, which would thereby - as the reasoning suggests - attract more dissatisfied people to the street in joining the burgeoning anti-government movement that the Western media would allege had 'organically' sprung up in response. Additionally, this sly form of externally triggered economic civil war (the US' strategic organization of foreign labor strikers against their own targeted economy) also had the unstated ulterior motive of provoking the authorities into a physical response that could then be used to generate intentionally misleading media reports that in turn induce even more anti-government hostility among the masses and feed the Color Revolution movement.

Military:

The icing on the cake and the real power multiplier in this entire operation isn't the Color Revolution figurehead's religious affiliation or the economic civil war that the US has tried to provoke, but the fact that some respected war veterans from the country's independence struggle have withdrawn their support for Mugabe and are actively campaigning for his overthrow. They [began signaling](#) their discontent earlier this year during a series of

government meetings and public statements, but in timed coordination with the Color Revolution that has now broken out, Secretary General of the [Zimbabwe National Liberation War Veterans Association](#) (ZNLWVA) [Victor Matemadanda proclaimed](#) that “Tsvangirai can be a better enemy because a defined enemy is an enemy you know, but a pretender is much serious, dangerous and can destroy anyone.” He was speaking about the [influential G40 faction](#) within the ruling ZANU-PF party that some commentators believe will ascend to power in the wake of Mugabe’s passing, but the salience of his statement is that he is openly plotting to work together with the pro-American ‘opposition’ agent in maneuvering his forces in a post-Mugabe reality. This was preceded by an organizational spokesman [voicing support](#) for the Color Revolution, and earlier this year, it’s notable that the veterans were [very loud](#) in their opposition to Grace Mugabe and her political allies, obviously positioning themselves as some form of incipient ‘[nationalist opposition](#)’ to the government and its leader’s assumed successor.

The involvement of the ZNLWVA is very important and shouldn’t be overlooked by any observers. This constituency, however patriotic it may be, essentially represents an informal ally of the US in weakening popular support for the Mugabe Administration. There’s no objection being raised to the organic development of a patriotic opposition to the government, but it’s just that the ZNLWVA appears to be inadvertently furthering the exact same objective as the US at this moment, which is the diminishment of civil trust in the government and the promotion of a regime change agenda.

There’s likely no contact between American intelligence agencies and this group, and they’d probably immediately reject any outreaches that could be or might have already been made, but the case of ZNLWVA proves that even presumably well intentioned patriotic organizations could unwittingly function as “useful idiots” in lending ‘legitimacy’ to the US’ preplanned scheme, mostly in the pursuit of their own narrow self-interests but possibly also out of the conspiratorial actions of some of its co-opted members. ZNLWVA’s partisanship on the side of the Color Revolutionaries is also meant to exert influence on the military and security forces who might understandably be reluctant to forcibly respond to “their own” if the government orders them to disband the riotous disturbances. The underlying purpose of the veterans’ group is to form the core of a “patriotic-nationalist” opposition against Mugabe that could attract current servicemen and trigger defections, thus weakening the make-or-break powerbrokers that could hold the most control during the uncertain post-Mugabe transitional period (whether he dies or is overthrown).

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