The Military in Burma/Myanmar: On the Longevity of Tatmadaw Rule and Influence

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The Myanmar military has dominated that complex country for most of the period since independence in 1948. The fourth coup of 1 February 2021 was the latest by the military to control those aspects of society it deemed essential to its own interests, and its perception of state interests.
- The military's institutional power was variously maintained by rule by decree, through political parties it founded and controlled, and through constitutional provisions it wrote that could not be amended without its approval.
- This fourth coup seems a product of personal demands for power between Senior General Min Aung Hlaing and Aung San Suu Kyi, and the especially humiliating defeat of the military-backed party at the hands of the National League for Democracy in the November 2020 elections.
- The violent and bloody suppression of widespread demonstrations continues, compromise seems unlikely, and the previous diarchic governance will not return.
- Myanmar's political and economic future is endangered and suppression will only result in future outbreaks of political frustration.