

Observation no: 91 (Arab Israeli War)

Country-year: Jordan - 1947

1. Did the current regime come to power in a military coup?

No.

Jordan gained its formal independence from the mandate of Great Britain in 1946. Abdullah, brother of King Faysal in Iraq, had been in power as emir since the establishment of the Hashemite monarchy by the British in 1921 in the then called Principality of Transjordan and then as king of the Kingdom of Jordan after independence.¹

2. Has the country ever experienced a military coup?

No.

The army of Transjordan, the Arab Legion, which purpose was to protect the King's regime, was financed and led by the British until 1956 when the Anglo-Jordanian Treaty that safeguarded Britain's influence in the country terminated. Because of the British influence over the army and mutual reliance of the army and the government, the Arab Legion never challenged the King's regime.²

3. Is the country's top leader a former military officer?

No.

See answer question 1.

4. Are ethnic, sectarian, or racial criteria used to exclude segments of the population from the officer corps?

Yes.

The recruitment of the officer corps consisted in the direct promotion of ordinary soldiers from the ranks that were in majority composed of Bedouins from southern tribes for which the prestige of serving in the army was very high. This was to the detriment of allegedly more politicized, and therefore potential opponents to the regime, urban Arabs. The result of this method of recruitment was the high

¹ Heller, Mark. Politics and the Military in Iraq and Jordan, 1920-1958: The British Influence. *Armed Forces & Society*, 1977, pp. 88-89.

² Heller, Mark, pp. 89-90 & 92.

concentration of Bedouin officers in operational ground units and in elite forces such as the Royal guard.³

5. Are there strict ideological requirements for entry into the senior officer corps?

Yes.

British officers dominated the senior officer corps from the creation of the legion that was itself commanded by the British Lieutenant-General Sir John Bagot Glubb, known as Glubb Pasha. After Jordan's involvement in the 1948 war with Israel particularly, the recruitment of British officers in senior positions was accelerated in an attempt to secure the British influence in the legion, and expand and modernize the armed forces in general.⁴

6. Is party membership required for entry into the senior officer corps?

No.

I cannot find evidence of this in the major histories already cited.

7. Does military training involve extensive political education or ideological indoctrination?

Yes.

In the units, and particularly in the legion schools where many of the future recruits studied, the commander of the legion, Glubb Pasha, transmitted his own personal and professional "values"; the most important one being loyalty to the king.⁵

8. Has the military been used to repress internal dissent in the last five years?

No.

I cannot find evidence of this in the major histories already cited.

9. Has the military been used to govern the country in the last five years?

No.

See answers to questions 1 & 2.

³ Heller, Mark, pp. 92-93.

⁴ Heller, Mark, p. 91.

⁵ Heller, Mark, p. 94.

10. Is there a paramilitary organization separate from the regular military, used to provide regime or leader security?

Yes.

The Royal Guard, stationed in Amman, ensured the regime and leader security.

11. Is there an internal intelligence apparatus dedicated to watching the regular military?

No.

I cannot find evidence of this in the major histories already cited.

12. Has a purge of the officer corps occurred in the last five years?

No.

However, until 1939 under the command of British Major-General Peake, the politically active officers and partisans of King Abdullah's political opponents, who were mostly veterans of the Ottoman army, were dismissed. This purge was conducted in order to secure the army's loyalty to the king and to ensure its role of protecting the regime while staying away of politics.⁶

13. Is there an institutionalized forum through which civilian leaders and military officers regularly exchange information?

No.

I cannot find evidence of this in the major histories already cited.

⁶ Heller, Mark, p. 92.