

Observation no: 219

Country-year: United Kingdom 2000

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

No.

2. Has the country ever experienced a military coup?

No.

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

No. Prime Minister (PM) Tony Blair, who served from 1997 through 2007 was a career politician.

4. Is the military officer corps largely closed to those who do not share the leader's ethnic or sectarian background?

No. The *Race Relations Act, 1965* outlawed discrimination on the basis of "colour [sic], race, or ethnic or national origins."¹

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

No.

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

No.

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

No.

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

No. That said, the British Armed forces were stationed in Northern Ireland under "Operation Banner" from August 1969 through July 2007, in support of police operations against the Provisional Irish Republican Army (IRA). 1998 marked the official close to the conflict with the signing of the Good Friday Agreement and the

¹ Hepple, B.A. (1966). "Race Relations Act 1965". *Modern Law Review* 29: 806.

return of self-government to Northern Ireland.² The agreement however, was initially implemented in fits and starts and many issues unresolved, and troops were still stationed in Northern Ireland until 2007.

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

No. The United Kingdom has been a democratic, civilian-led, constitutional democracy since the 18th or 19th century.³

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

No.

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

No.

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

No.

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

Yes. A unified Ministry of Defence was created in April, 1964, and the Defence Select Committee (in its current form) in the British House of Commons was established in 1979 to oversee operations at the Ministry of Defense and the Armed Forces.⁴ It is also worth noting that in 1967, the government downgraded the service ministries and briefly eliminated them in 1970, causing them to be greatly weakened.⁵ In 1970, service chiefs were subordinated to the Chief of Defense Staff and service ministers

² Tim Ripley and Mike Chappell, *Security forces in Northern Ireland, 1969-92*, Osprey, 1993, pp. 19-21.

³ The exact point at which England democratized has been disputed. For example see, Sheri Berman, "How Democracies Emerge: Lessons from Europe," *Journal of Democracy*. Vol. 18, No. 1 (2007): 28-41.

⁴ "Defence Committee – Role – UK Parliament," *UK Parliament*, Accessed May 21, 2014, <http://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/defence-committee/role/>.

⁵ Colonel Hector E. Pagan, "Defense Reorganization, the Road Ahead for the 21st Century," USAWCS Strategy Research Project, April 7, accessed June 1, 2014, <http://www.hsdl.org/?view&did=458446>, p. 10.

were dismissed as the British endeavored to privatize many formerly military functions.⁶

⁶ Ibid.