

Observation no: 50

Country-year: 1938

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

No.

The People's Revolutionary Party took power in 1921 after a political vacuum and subsequent foreign invasion that occurred after independence in 1911. While it certainly used military forces to secure this power, the event was more civil war or revolution than military coup.

2. Has the country ever experienced a military coup?

No.

There is no history of military coup in modern Mongolia (1911 and beyond).

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

Yes.

Dogsom was one of the first revolutionaries in the Mongolia People's Army and built the Mongolian communist military.

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

No.

I could find no evidence of ethnic or sectarian exclusions to the officer corps; the Mongolians suffered from a lack of military personnel and so reverted to complete conscription in 1936. I was unable to find any policies that would specifically keep a particular ethnicity or sect from the officer corps once conscripted.¹

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

Yes.

¹ C.R. Bawden, *The Modern History of Mongolia*, (New York: Frederick A. Praeger Publishers, 1968), pg. 359.

All senior officers were Communists.

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

Yes.

Members of the senior officer corps were also members of the People's Revolutionary Party.

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

Yes.

The Mongolian People's Revolutionary Army was organized under the same guidance as the Soviet military and therefore was headed by political commissars who were responsible for conducting and ensuring political training in the military.²

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

Yes.

A series of purges and violent actions were taken by the military in order to put down dissent against the communist party.³

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

No.

From 1933-1938, Mongolia was governed by the civilian People's Revolutionary Party.

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

No.

I could find no evidence of a paramilitary organization.

² Robert Rupen, *How Mongolia is Really Ruled: A Political History of the Mongolian People's Republic 1900-1978*, (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1979).

³ Ibid.

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

Yes.

The GVO-MVD was a secret police that watched civilians and military for signs of disloyalty to the Communist regime in Mongolia.⁴

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

Yes.

A prominent military marshal and former minister of war, Gelegdorjin Demid, was suspiciously killed in 1937, facilitating a subsequent purge called the Great Terror which led to the death of 30,000 Mongolians, including civilians and military.⁵

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

No.

I could find no evidence of an institutionalized forum between civilian leaders and military officers during this period. However, it is likely that something may have existed between the Soviets there as military/political advisors and ruling members of the Mongolian and Soviet governments.

⁴ Rupen, *How Mongolia is Really Ruled: A Political History of the Mongolian People's Republic 1900-1978*, pg. 57.

⁵ Rupen, *How Mongolia is Really Ruled: A Political History of the Mongolian People's Republic 1900-1978*, pg. 46.