

Observation no: 59

Country-year: United States 1940

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. Franklin Delano Roosevelt served as Assistant Secretary of the Navy in World War One, which was the second-highest ranking civilian official in the United States Department of the Navy.

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

Yes. Despite significant pressure from the NAACP in the years immediately prior to the U.S. entrance into World War II, the Army and Army Air Forces restricted or excluded blacks until 1948, thus restricting their ability to become non-commissioned officers.¹ The Army, for example, had segregated units until 1944. Army Chief of Staff General George C. Marshall in 1940 explained his understanding that a policy of segregation was good for military effectiveness writing that, "experiments within the Army in the solution of social problems are fraught with danger to efficiency, discipline, or morale."² In 1948, President Harry Truman issued Executive Order 9981 which called for the desegregation of the Armed Forces and equality of treatment and opportunity for all service members.³

There were official institutional avenues to becoming a commissioned officer, including military academies and direct commission. However, unofficial discrimination, limited black enrollment in eligible colleges, and the erroneous belief by many that they were barred from becoming officers due to their ethnic

¹ In 1939 the Army force comprised only 3640 men of a total Army of 189,839. Only five black officers were on duty in the regular army. Blacks were not permitted in the Army Air Force or the Marine Corps. Among the Navy's 2807 black enlisted men, all served in the messman's branch. See: Osur, Major Alan. *Black-White Relations in the U.S. Military 1940-1972*. Air University Review, November-December 1981. See also: "Integration of the Armed Forces, 1940-1965," by Morris J. MacGregor Jr.

² Letters from General Marshall to Senator Lodge and Judge Hastie, 27 September 1940 and 1 December 1941, Albert F. Simpson Historical Research Center, Maxwell AFB, Alabama.

³ Military Leadership Diversity Commission. *From Representation to Inclusion: Diversity Leadership for the 21st Century Military*, Military Leadership Diversity Commission Report, Arlington, VA, 2011.

background inhibited blacks from having equal access to the officer corps. The first twelve black Naval Officers were commissioned in 1944.

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

No. The U.S. military is a professional force.

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.

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

No.

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?

No. That said, the military was clearly subordinate to civilians prior to World War Two,⁴ and there was Congressional oversight of the military via budgetary committees. That said, an interagency mechanism was not formally institutionalized until the National Security Act of 1947 established the National Security Council, the Congressional Armed Services Committees, and the Joint Chiefs of Staff.⁵

⁴ Huntington, Samuel P. 1957. *The Soldier and the State: The Theory and Politics of Civil-Military Relations*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

⁵ Avant, Deborah D, *Political Institutions and Military Change*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994), 32; Feaver, Peter. *An Agency Theory Explanation of American Civil-Military Relations during the Cold War*. Working Paper for the Program for the Study in Democracy, Institutions and Political Economy. 2007, p. 12.