

Observation no: 144 – 145 Football War

Country-year: Honduras 1969

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

Yes.

The President of Honduras at the time of the Football War, Oswaldo López Arellano, came to power through a military coup in 1963.¹

2. Has the country ever experienced a military coup?

Yes.

The President of Honduras came to power through a military coup in 1963. Prior to this, there was a military coup in 1956.

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

Yes.

Oswaldo López Arellano, President of Honduras, was a military officer.

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

No.

The population of Honduras is generally ethnically mixed, and thus such a requirement would be difficult to implement.

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

No.

The 1963 coup that installed López Arellano in the presidency was undertaken in order to prevent the liberal candidate from winning the 1963 presidential election. However, after the coup, there were no purges against liberals in the government or in society at large.²

¹ See Leonard, Thomas M. *The History of Honduras*, Santa Barbara, CA: Greenwood, 2011, p. 146.

² See Leonard 2011, 146.

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

No.

Given the lack of purges and strong ideology in the regime, party membership was not required in order to join the senior officer corps.

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

No.

Although the López Arellano regime did not have a strong ideological foundation, it received support from the United States for its anti-Communist views. Communist sympathizers were unwelcome in the government.³ However, no source discusses indoctrination programs.

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

No.

Upon taking control, López Arellano “set out to silence the so-called radical political elements” and “disbanded alleged Communist, pro-Castro organizations and other leftist groups.”⁴ However, no source mentions that violence was used to suppress Communist-identified groups.

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

Yes.

The military staged a coup in 1963 and the state was military-ruled at the time of the 1969 Football War.

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

No.

³ Nieto, Clara. *Masters of War: Latin America and U.S. Aggression from the Cuban Revolution Through the Clinton Years*, New York: Seven Stories Press, 2011, p. 113.

⁴ See Leonard 2011, 146.

At the time of the 1963 coup, the Honduran armed forces were divided into the regular military and a Civilian Guard.⁵ After taking power, López Arellano replaced the Civilian Guard with a “national police force commanded by regular military officers.”⁶ No source mentions that this national police was used to protect the leader.

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

No.

No source mentions an internal intelligence apparatus targeting the military.

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

No.

Although the Civilian Guard was replaced with a national police force, no source mentions that this process included a purge of officers or other retraining.⁷

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

No.

The military leadership met with civilian leaders in the spring of 1968, however such meetings appear to have been ad hoc and were not regularly scheduled.⁸

⁵ Walker, Thomas W and Ariel C. Armony. *Repression, Resistance, and Democratic Transition in Central America*, Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2000, p. 50.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Leonard 2011, 147.