

Observation no: 108

Country-year: United States, 1949

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?

Yes. President Harry Truman was a Field Artillery Officer in World War I. He served in the National Guard Officers' Reserve Corps and retired with the rank of colonel in 1953.¹

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

No. In 1948, President Harry Truman issued Executive Order 9981, calling for the desegregation of the Armed Forces and equality of treatment and opportunity for all service members.² That said, due to legacies of discrimination and the presence of segregated units prior to World War II, and the very recent Executive Order, minorities were still underrepresented at the officer corps level as of 1949.³

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.

¹ "Truman Library - Records of the Adjutant General's Office: Military Personnel File of Harry S. Truman," TrumanLibrary.org, accessed May 5, 2014, <https://www.trumanlibrary.org/hstpape/rg407.htm>.

² Military Leadership Diversity Commission. *From Representation to Inclusion: Diversity Leadership for the 21st Century Military*, Military Leadership Diversity Commission Report, Arlington, VA., 2011.

³ The Navy and Air force were integrated by 1950 but the Army did not achieve full desegregation until after the Korean War. For more information, see, For more information, see, Isaac Hampton, *The Black Officer Corps: A History of Black Military Advancement from Integration through Vietnam*, (NY: Routledge, 2013).

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?

Yes. The National Security Acts of 1947 and 1949 overhauled the American defense establishment, enhancing and institutionalizing congressional oversight of the military.⁴ The National Security Council, established in 1947, functions as an arena for information sharing between the military and civilians.⁵ Additionally, Congress oversees the military at the level of Armed Services Committees (established in 1947)⁶ and has budgetary oversight via the Subcommittees on Defense

⁴ Avant, Deborah D, *Political Institutions and Military Change*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994), 32.

⁵ 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.

⁶ See, "1947-1954," National Archives Website, accessed May 5, 2014, <http://www.archives.gov/legislative/finding-aids/reference/senate/armed-services/1947-1954.html>.

Appropriations. The National Security Act of 1947 also officially established the Joint Chiefs of Staff, comprised of service chiefs from the Marine Corps, the Army, Air Force, and Navy who would elect a Chairman as their direct line of communication to civilian government via the Secretary of Defense.⁷

⁷ Its predecessor was the 1942 Combined Chiefs of Staff (CCS), a joint effort of Churchill and FDR. See, "Joint Chiefs of Staff," Navy Administration Website, accessed May 5, 2014, http://navyadministration.tpub.com/12966/css/12966_224.htm .