

Observation no: 119

Country-year: 1956

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

No.

Sultan Mohammad V officially took over power after Morocco gained its independence from French and Spanish colonial rule.

2. Has the country ever experienced a military coup?

Yes.

In 1951, General Jiun surrounded the Moroccan palace and threatened further attack by rural Berber forces if Sultan Mohammad V refused to purge nationalist elements from his government.¹

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

No.

Mohammad V descended from a monarchic dynasty and had no past experience as a military officer.

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

Yes.

The officer corps was made up primarily of royalist loyal Berbers.²

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

No.

The only real consideration for entry into senior officer corps was loyalty to the monarchy.³

¹ Rom Landaou, *Moroccan Drama 1900-1955*, (San Francisco: The American Academy of Asian Studies, 1956), pg. 280.

² Michael Willis, *Politics and Power in the Maghreb* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012), pg. 83.

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

No.

While the Royal Armed Forces was dominated by royalists loyal to the monarchy and anti-Istiqlal party, it was not associated with any one party.⁴

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

No.

I found no evidence of extensive political education or ideological indoctrination. At this point in Moroccan history, there was very little professionalization of the forces (including military academies or extensive professional education), and so the mere capability to indoctrinate the military was largely absent from the Royal Armed Forces.⁵

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

Yes.

The colonial French military was often used to put down nationalist dissent in Morocco.⁶

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

No.

French and Spanish colonial governments led the country as a protectorate under the titular head of the Moroccan monarchy before Morocco gained its independence in 1956. However, these colonial governments were largely governed by imperial armed forces.

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

³ Douglas Ashford, *Political Change in Morocco* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961), pg. 180.

⁴ Willis, *Politics and Power in the Maghreb*, pg. 82. Ashford, *Political Change in Morocco*, pg. 180.

⁵ Ashford, *Political Change in Morocco*.

⁶ Kurd, El, and Dana Saed. "Civil-military relations and monarchical survival: a comparative analysis of Morocco and Jordan." PhD diss., 2014; Susan Gilson Miller, *A History of Modern Morocco* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), pg. 153.

No.

There were paramilitary organizations in Morocco at this time, but they were largely loyal to the nationalists and not the royalist regime and consisted of previous ALN members.⁷

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

No.

I found no evidence of an internal intelligence apparatus to watch the regular military.

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

Yes.

In 1951, under threat of a coup from the General Juin and the Berbers, the king purged nationalist elements from top positions throughout the government and military.⁸

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

No.

The forum, the High Council of National Defense, was formed in 1957 to facilitate discussion between the Ministry of Defense and six other ministers of the Moroccan government and met under the chairmanship of the King to discuss issues related to the military and national defense.⁹

⁷ Susan Miller, *A History of Modern Morocco*. C.R. Pennell, *Morocco: From Empire to Independence* (Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 2003).

⁸ Rom Lamdau, *Moroccan Drama 1900-1955*.

⁹ Ashford, *Political Change in Morocco*, pg. 181.