

Observation no: 209

Country-year: United Kingdom 1998

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. Prime Minister (PM) Tony Blair, who served from 1997 through 2007 was a career politician.

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

No. The *Race Relations Act, 1965* outlawed discrimination on the basis of "colour [sic], race, or ethnic or national origins."¹

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

No.

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. That said, the British Armed forces were stationed in Northern Ireland under "Operation Banner" from August 1969 through July 2007, in support of police operations against the Provisional Irish Republican Army (IRA).² The IRA did not

¹ Hepple, B.A. (1966). "Race Relations Act 1965". *Modern Law Review* 29: 806.

² Tim Ripley and Mike Chappell, *Security forces in Northern Ireland, 1969-92*, Osprey, 1993.

announce a cease-fire until 1994, so the British Armed Forces participated in multiple operations in Northern Ireland prior to the signing of the Good Friday Agreement in 1998.³

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

No. The United Kingdom has been a democratic, civilian-led, constitutional democracy since the 18th or 19th century.⁴

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. A unified Ministry of Defence was created in April, 1964, and the Defence Select Committee (in its current form) in the British House of Commons was established in 1979 to oversee operations at the Ministry of Defense and the Armed Forces.⁵

³ "BBC-History- The Troubles," *BBC History*, accessed May 27, 2014, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/troubles>.

⁴ The exact point at which England democratized has been disputed. For example see, Sheri Berman. "How Democracies Emerge: Lessons from Europe," *Journal of Democracy*. Vol. 18, No. 1 (2007): 28-41.

⁵ "Defence Committee – Role – UK Parliament," *UK Parliament*, Accessed May 21, 2014, <http://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/defence-committee/role/>.