

Observation no: 144 – 145 Football War

Country-year: El Salvador 1969

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

No.

Although part of a military regime, Fidel Sánchez Hernández was elected president as a member of the military-backed Party of National Conciliation in 1967.¹

2. Has the country ever experienced a military coup?

Yes.

Previous coups took place in 1931, 1944, 1948, 1960, and 1961.²

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

Yes.

Fidel Sánchez Hernández served as military attaché of El Salvador to Washington, D.C. and Paris.³

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

No.⁴

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

No.

Membership in the Communist party was illegal for all citizens, however there were no other ideological requirements.⁵

¹ Eguizábal, Cristina. "El Salvador: elecciones sin democracia." *Polemica* (Costa Rica) 14/15:16-33 (marzo-junio 1984). 1984.

² Hebditch, David and Ken Connor. *How to Stage a Military Coup: From Planning to Execution*, New York: Skyhorse Publishing, 2009, p. 201.

³ Encyclopedia Britannica Online, s.v. "Fidel Sánchez Hernández," accessed January 31, 2013, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/521754/Fidel-Sanchez-Hernandez>.

⁴ Stanley, William. "Re: Question about military in Central America." Message to the author, 25 Feb. 2013. E-mail.

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

No.

“Party membership was not required for entry into the senior officer corps, but it was expected that military officers were loyal to the President who was [commander in chief] of the armed forces and at the same time the top leader of Partido de Conciliacion Nacional (PCN).”⁶

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.⁷ However, no source discusses indoctrination programs.

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

No.

This “task was reserved [for] the National Police and National Guard.”⁸

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

Yes.

The current government is military.

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

No.

⁵ From e-mail with Professor William Stanley, Department of Political Science, University of New Mexico.

⁶ Pérez Pineda, Carlos. “Re: Question about El Salvadoran history.” Message to the author, 19 Apr. 2013. E-mail.

⁷ 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.

⁸ Pérez Pineda, Carlos. “Re: Question about El Salvadoran history.” Message to the author, 19 Apr. 2013. E-mail.

According to Professor William Stanley, “presidential security units existed but they were affiliated with the armed forces, not separate.”

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

No.

According to Professor William Stanley, El Salvador “had internal intelligence services, dedicated mainly to watching regime opponents. Occasionally they may have directed attention at an errant military officer, but this would not have been their primary task.”

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

No.

No source mentions this.

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

No.

No source mentions this.