

Observation no: 180 – 181 War over the Aouzou Strip

Country-year: Libya 1985

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

Yes.

King Idris of Libya was overthrown by Signals Captain Muammar al-Qadhafi on September 1st, 1969.¹

2. Has the country ever experienced a military coup?

Yes.

King Idris of Libya was overthrown by Signals Captain Muammar al-Qadhafi on September 1st, 1969.²

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

Yes.

Muammar al-Qadhafi was a Signals Captain in the Libyan military.

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

No

We could not find evidence of this sort of selection process in the officer corps. This may be because Qadhafi sought to create a pan-Libyan identity that would undermine the previous monarchical and tribal sources of authority in the country.

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

Yes

Qadhafi's officers had to conform to his anti-monarchical, Islamist revolutionary agenda. See question 7.

¹ Simons, Geoff. *Libya and the West: From Independence to Lockerbie*, New York: St. Martin's Press, 2003, p. 43.

² Simons, Geoff. *Libya and the West: From Independence to Lockerbie*, New York: St. Martin's Press, 2003, p. 43.

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

Yes.

According to Simons, “a government decree (30 May 1972) was passed to render membership of any political party other than the Arab Socialist Union a capital crime.”³ Given the strong ideological nature of al-Qadhafi’s regime, membership in his political party was likely an unstated requirement.

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

Yes.

Al-Qadhafi’s regime’s ideology included anti-Israel, pro-Islamist, and anti-imperialist indoctrination.⁴

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

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

Yes.

Al-Qadhafi is a military ruler.

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

Yes.

The Revolutionary Guard Corps guarded al-Qadhafi and his family.⁵

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

³ Simons, Geoff. *Libya and the West: From Independence to Lockerbie*, New York: St. Martin’s Press, 2003, p. 103.

⁴ Pollack, Kenneth M. *Arabs At War: Military Effectiveness, 1948 - 1991*, Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2004, p. 360.

⁵ Pollack, Kenneth M. *Arabs At War: Military Effectiveness, 1948 - 1991*, Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2004, p. 364.

Yes.

Al-Qadhafi sent “informants and ‘people’s commissars’ into the military” to spy on the officer corps.⁶

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

Yes.

Al-Qadhafi “rotated senior officers to prevent them from developing a rapport with the troops.”⁷

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

No.

No source indicates the existence of such an institution. Additionally, civilian life was strongly curtailed in Al-Qadhafi’s government.

⁶ Pollack, Kenneth M. *Arabs At War: Military Effectiveness, 1948 - 1991*, Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2004, p. 364.

⁷ Pollack, Kenneth M. *Arabs At War: Military Effectiveness, 1948 - 1991*, Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2004, p. 364.