

Observation no: 203

Country-year: 1994

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

No.

President Ballen came to office in a democratic election.

2. Has the country ever experienced a military coup?

Yes.

The country's first coup occurred in 1851, which left a defining mark on the division of political parties in the country. Additionally, there were a series of coups in 1963 and then throughout the 1970s and attempted coups in 1986, 1987, and 1989.¹

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

No.

President Ballen was a career politician with no previous experience in the military.

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

No.

I could find no evidence of any ethnic or sectarian restrictions to the officer corps; even the Indian population was included in the Ecuadorian officer corps.

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

No.

I could find no evidence of any ideological requirements for entry into the senior officer corps.

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

No.

¹ Brian Loveman, *For La Patria: Politics and the Armed Forces in Latin America* (Wilmington: Scholarly Resources, 1999), pg. 216.

I could find no evidence of party membership requirements for the senior officers.

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

No.

I could find no evidence of political or ideological indoctrination in the Ecuadorian military training system. In fact, the focus appears to be on professionalization and technical skills.²

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

Yes.

The Ecuadorian armed forces considered internal policing a legitimate mission and took part in these operations regularly, including countering protests (especially those surrounding the oil industry) and fighting crime.³

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

No.

Despite some aborted coup attempts, the Ecuadorian government from 1989-1994 was firmly governed by civilians.

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

No.

While there are reports of paramilitaries tied to landowners, I could find no reporting that linked any paramilitaries specifically to the government or to regime/leader security.⁴

² J. Samuel Fitch, "The Armed Forces and Society in South America: How Similar? How Different?" available at <http://www.resdal.org/producciones-miembros/redes-03-fitch.pdf> (accessed 4 May 2015)

³ Maiah Jaskoski, *Military Politics and Democracy in the Andes*, (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 2013), pg. 47.

⁴ Canada: Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, *Ecuador: Information on paramilitary groups currently under the control of landowners, and on links between these groups and the government*, 1 May 1994, ECU16956.E, available at: <http://www.refworld.org/docid/3ae6ad8e20.html> [accessed 4 May 2015]

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

No.

While I found evidence of intelligence delegated to the police, I could find no evidence that a mission of the police intelligence was to watch the regular military.

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

No.

I found no evidence of any purges of the officer corps from 1989-1994.

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

Yes.

The National Security Council (COSENA) is comprised of the President, presidents of “the congress and supreme court, and ministers of defense, government, finances and foreign relations.”⁵

⁵ Maiah Jaskoski, *Military Politics and Democracy in the Andes*, (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 2013), pg. 31.