

Observation no: 81

Country-year: 1938

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

No.

The government of Finland in 1938 was democratically elected.

2. Has the country ever experienced a military coup?

No.

There was an attempted coup in 1932 following the Civil War, but it was conducted by militiamen and the military stood with the government to ultimately put down the coup attempt.¹

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

No.

Neither the President (a farmer and career politician) nor the Prime Minister (a former botanist) were previously military officers.

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 ethnic or sectarian restrictions to the Finnish military corps.

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

No.

The Finnish military in 1938 was largely separate from political ideologies, though they were fervent cheerleaders for the expansion and further funding of the Finnish military.

¹ David Kirby, *A Concise History of Finland*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

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

No.

While senior officers were often attached to defense lobbying organizations that were more closely aligned to certain parties (i.e. the Fascists, the Swedish party, and the Conservative party), there was no requirement implicit or explicit for senior officers to be members of a particular party.²

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

No.

The Finnish military did not conduct extensive political or ideological training; however, it did make a concerted effort to train all members of the military (including and especially conscripts) about the necessity of good defense and the usefulness of a better equipped military.³

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

No.

I could find no evidence of the military being used to repress internal dissent from 1933-1938.

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

No.

The Finnish state was firmly governed by civilians during this period.

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

² William Stover, *Military Politics in Finland: The Development of Government Control Over the Armed Forces*, (Washington: University Press of America, 1981), pg. 158; H.M. Tillotson, *Finland at Peace and War*, (Norwich: Michael Russell Publishing, 1993).

³ Stover, *Military Politics in Finland: The Development of Government Control Over the Armed Forces*, pg. 159.

No.

In fact, due to the abortive coup in 1932, the Finnish government reorganized the military to place any potential paramilitary (i.e. militias) under the umbrella of the military and therefore under civilian control.⁴

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

No.

I could find no evidence of an internal intelligence apparatus dedicated to watching the regular military.

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

No.

I could find no evidence of a purge of the officer corps between 1933 and 1938.

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

Yes.

The National Defense Council included military officials, the Prime Minister, and civilian cabinet members.⁵

⁴ Stover, *Military Politics in Finland: The Development of Government Control Over the Armed Forces*, pg. 141.

⁵ Stover, *Military Politics in Finland: The Development of Government Control Over the Armed Forces*, pg. 155.