

Observation no.: 160 – 163 War Over Angola

Country-year: South Africa 1974

South Africa in 1974 during the War over Angola

Coding Questions

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

No.

While only White South Africans were eligible to vote, the last election was held without intimidation.

2. *Has the country ever experienced a military coup?*

No.

South Africa has never had a military coup.

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

No.

In 1970, Prime Minister John Vorster was the chief of the executive branch of the South African government. He was active in the anti-British, pro-Nazi militant group during World War II and became a general in its paramilitary.¹ However, he never served in the regular South African armed forces.

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

Yes.

Non-whites were not incorporated into the South African Defense Forces (SADF) until after the start of the war in Angola.²

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

No.

¹ Herbstein, Dennis. White Lies: Canon Collins and the Secret War Against Apartheid. (Suffolk, James Currey Publishers, 2004), p. 44.

² Peled, Alan. A Question of Loyalty: Military Manpower Policy in Multiethnic States. (Cornell, NY; Cornell University Press, 1998), p. 44.

A source indicates that there was a purge of individuals who did not support apartheid after the election of the National Party in 1948.³ However, no source mentions that purges continued past this point. Given the nature of the South African government, however, most members of the military were pro-apartheid. However, no source indicates that there was a formal requirement that members of the senior officer corps share this view.

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

No.

South African politics was divided between pro- and anti-apartheid parties. Given the fact that most officers supported apartheid, it follows that they were also members of the pro-apartheid National Party. However, no source indicates that this was a formal requirement.

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

Yes.

All white South African men were conscripted for military service between 1967 and 1993. As a part of their basic training, recruits were taught that they were fighting against Communism and terrorists (Dubin 2013, 216).⁴

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

Yes.

The military was used to put down anti-apartheid protests in the townships.

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

No.

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

³ Unterhalter, Elaine. *Women soldiers and white unity in apartheid South Africa*. In *Images of Women in Peace and War: Cross-Cultural and Historical Perspectives*. Edited by Sharon MacDonald, Pat Holden, and Shirley Ardener. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1998, p. 101.

⁴ Dubin, Steve. *Spearheading Debate: Culture Wars and Uneasy Truces*. (Auckland Park; Jacana Media, 2013), p. 216.

No.

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

Yes.

The Bureau of State Security (BOSS) performed intelligence and security operations separate from the SADF (Danopoulos and Watson 1996, 377).⁵

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

No.

No source indicates that there was a purge since 1948.

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

No.

No source indicates the existence of such a forum.

⁵ Danopoulos, Constantine Panos and Cynthia Ann Watson. The Political Role of the Military: An International Handbook. (Westport, CT; Greenwood Publishing Group, 1996), p. 377.