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**QUESTION:** In not more than three pages discuss the stages of insurgency.

Insurgency is first and foremost a political struggle. It is defined as a struggle between non ruling elites or groups and ruling authorities in which the non-ruling groups consciously use political resources to reformulate or sustain the basis of legitimacy of one or more aspects of politics. It is also referred to as a protracted political military struggle directed towards overthrowing or displacing the legitimacy of a constituted government or occupying power completely through the use of irregular military forces and illegal political organizations. Factors for each stage are analyzed and they are both continuous and cumulative. As an insurgency advances through the stages, indicators from earlier stages will remain relevant, as will the ways in which the factors build on each other. There are several stages of insurgency.

First of all, we have the **Pre insurgency stage**. In this stage, insurgency has to make its self present by the use of violence as a result of this procedure, conflict is difficult to detect due to the use of underground activities. During the pre insurgency stage, as insurgent movement begin to organize as leadership takes place and insurgents form complaint whereby a group identity begin to enroll and train members and accumulate arms and supplies. Insurgent organizers make use of historical, societal, political, or economic conditions which generate discontent among a segment of the population to rally support for their movement. Most of this conditions are exacerbated an can affect one sub group disproportionately such as a polarized winner-takes-all political system, which generates grievances among out groups and undermines the potential for cooperation in pursuit of common agendas. Another can be inept or corrupt security forces, especially the police because of their frequent interaction with people.

However, in the cause of this stage, insurgents seek to create a compelling narrative and also identify and publicize a grievance around which they can rally supporters. An example of indicators adopted by insurgents are media articles or opinion pieces on the issue, demonstrations, protests or emergence of promotional materials that generate popular discussion of the grievance. It is vividly observed that insurgencies seek to create a group identity that separates the group from national identity or the ruling elite. E.g increased emphasis on cultural, religious, language, or ethnic symbols that set the subgroup apart from the rest of the nation. As a result, the first indications of insurgent recruitment and training may emerge during this stage. Consequently, during this stage a radial insurgent group is weak, disorganized, and open to nonviolent government countermeasures. At this point, insurgents will probably have few weapons and limited military supplies.

Secondly, is the **Incipient conflict stage**. This stage is seen to be the most dangerous phase for insurgents because they have made their presence felt through initial attacks, but they are still weak and organizing. Incipient insurgency must harmonize the need to carry out attacks to show its viability, expose its cause with rally supporters, and provoke a government overreaction while restricting its condition to government security forces. It is noted that an ideal insurgent leader displays magnetism, the flexibility to rationalize ideology with the need to be extreme and influence local grievances, and an ability to endanger loyalty and maintain group unity. The documents of insurgents as well as the propaganda, or public statements will most times provide indications of how the insurgents conceive achieving their goals. Although disunity is a potential weakness outnumber for the insurgents, they may still prevail, especially against a weak government. However, insurgents are encouraged to establish sources for supplies they cannot obtain from the civilian population, including arms, ammunition, and other military equipment such as evidence of the insurgents purchasing supplies on the black market possibly using funds from diaspora contributions, criminal activity or plunder of natural resources such timber or diamonds.

Furthermore, the causes of the insurgency and elements of an eventual resolution may be primarily political, but the security forces play a critical role in containing the insurgency and protecting the population. It is also important for a government to get support from an ally in the form of weapons and material, training, intelligence, advisers or combat troops.

Thirdly, is the **Open insurgency stage.** At this stage, insurgents overtly challenge state authority and attempt to exert control over territory. As the insurgents become more active, external support for the aggressive probably become more capable, if it exists. Also, insurgents may develop a ‘shadow government’ that reflects state administrative structures and may establish ‘no-go’ areas where government representatives have been driven out and where only large formations of security forces can operate. Insurgents also thrive to engage security forces more often, but the insurgents still seek to avoid prolonged fire flights that would that would allow the military to capitalize on its advantage in firepower. In the open insurgency stage, it is important for the government to re establish security. Indicators of the strength of government security forces include civilians, especially across sub groups, voluntarily join government organized civilian self-defense groups etc.

Finally, is the **Resolution stage.** In this stage, research has it that an insurgency will eventually reach an end, either an insurgent victory, a negotiated settlement or a government victory. An insurgent victory is triggered by another insurgency by the expelled regimes supporters or by a subgroup excluded from new government. The only potential outcome is likely to be clear-cut, marked by the insurgent seizing control of the government, expelling a foreign occupier, or gaining independence for their region. There are also some signs that insurgents may be on the verge of obtaining their goal such as evidence that the population increasingly views the government as illegitimate, insurgent co-optation, incorporation, or elimination of other major groups opposed to the government. Government victory is likely to be a protracted process marked by gradual decline in violence as the insurgents lose military capabilities, external assistance and popular support. Signs of impeding government victory probably be ambiguous and seem more like atmospherics than specific indicators.

In conclusion, each insurgency differs as a result of conflict-specific factors which are being shaped. As research has it, the progress of insurgency is through certain common stages of development and this is likely to vary. Moreover, factors which are common in nature will promote analysts in access an insurgency through its life cycle. As a result, in the end insurgencies strive through the stages, indicators from earlier stages will also remain applicable, as will the speed in which the factors strengthen each other.

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