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Question: Discuss the stages of insurgency

Insurgency is defined by O’neil as a struggle between non-ruling groups and ruling authorities in which the non-ruling group consciously use political resources (organizational expertise, propaganda, demonstration e.t.c) and violence to destroy, reformulate or sustain the bases of legitimacy of or more aspect of politics.

Insurgency can be said to be asymmetric warfare because it is focused on avoiding the strength of the adversary (enemy) and exploiting their weakness. Hence, insurgency connotes a strategy of offense action against that of mass force action, to tackle weaken enemies at decisive moment. For the U.S military, insurgency is defined as an organized movement aimed at overthrow of a constituted government or to seize, nullify and challenge political control of a region through the use of violence, subversion and armed conflict.

STAGES OF INSURGENCY

For an insurgency to take place, there are different stages which it has to pass through or different processes that must be duly followed and they are as follows:

1. Pre-Insurgency: This is the first stage of an insurgency, this stage determines whether or not a situation would lead to an insurgency or not. In this stage the insurgents are at their teething stage and they are very vulnerable at this point seeing that they are not fully equipped and armed, the government gets to decide whether or not the complaints of the said insurgents are worth tending to or not, if they choose to negotiate and solve these problems, there would most likely be peace but once the government chooses to ignore them, the people can choose to carry out their grievances however they please.
2. Incipient conflict stage: At this stage, insurgents start to use force and violence to send their message across to the government, this stage is also tough for them because they aren’t fully equipped and they must try their possible best to avoid being exposed to the government. They make use of attacks called Guerrilla warfare. This involves the use of military means to a very high political effect, isolated attacks are planned which are meant to serve a political purpose and to forward their propaganda. The aim of this stage is to put a fear of safety in the otherwise comfortable government as well as gain attention.

3. Open Insurgency stage: This stage is also called the “decision” because it involves a full blown war against the government, it usually begins with the military taking up arms against a small government structure to gather resources, killing informants, looting weapons cache etc. This would result in the emergence of military objectives as well as encourage more people to take up arms. This would result in the buildup of a massive military force eventually taking over the country. At this last stage, it is evident that there is an insurgency and that the insurgents have managed to defeat the government both politically and militarily.