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INSURGENCY AND COUNTER INSURGENCY

QUESTION: DISUSS THE STAGES OF INSURGENCY

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.

While O’neill, defines the concept 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 differs from other movement in the use of violence to achieve political goals. As such, insurgency are usually internal struggle within states which normally connotes a protected political and military struggle designed to weaken the existing government power, control and legitimacy while increasing those of the insurgents. Hence, insurgency is seen as intra-state conflict. This doesn’t mean that insurgence can’t have external support or join that call to those of external organization (if they are in line of their aspiration).

 Stages of insurgency

1. Pre-insurgency Stage

A conflict in the pre-insurgency stage is difficult to detect because most activities are underground and the insurgency has yet to make its presence felt through the use of violence. Moreover, actions conducted in the open can easily be dismissed as nonviolent political activity. During this stage, an insurgent movement is beginning to organize: leadership is emerging, and the insurgents are establishing a grievance and a group identity, beginning to recruit and train members, and stockpiling arms and supplies.

1. Incipient Conflict Stage

A struggle enters the incipient conflict stage when the insurgents begin to use violence. Often these initial attacks provide analysts the first alert to the potential for an insurgency. The target government, however, frequently dismisses insurgent actions as the work of bandits, criminals, or terrorists, which increases the risk that the government will employ counterproductive measures. The incipient stage is the most dangerous phase for insurgents; they have made their presence felt through initial attacks, but they are still weak and organizing. An incipient insurgency must balance the need to conduct attacks to demonstrate its viability, publicize its cause, rally supporters, and provoke a government overreaction while limiting its exposure to government security forces. Insurgents may emphasize highly asymmetric and terrorist tactics, such as kidnappings, small bombings, assassinations, and night letters during this phase. Understanding the characteristics, capabilities, and actions of both the insurgents and the government can help analysts assess whether an incipient conflict is likely to sputter out or expand into a full-blown insurgency.

1. Open Insurgency Stage

At this stage, no doubt exists that the government is facing an insurgency. Politically, the insurgents are overtly challenging state authority and attempting to exert control over territory. Militarily, the insurgents are staging more frequent attacks, which have probably become more aggressive, violent, and sophisticated and involve larger numbers of fighters. As the insurgency becomes more active, external support for the belligerents probably becomes more apparent, if it exists.

1. Resolution Stage

Some insurgencies progress steadily through the life cycle stages many grow in fits and starts, occasionally regressing to earlier stages and others remain mired in one stage for decades. In theory, an insurgency will eventually reach a conclusion, either an insurgent victory, a negotiated settlement, or a government victory. At least 130 insurgent conflicts have occurred since World War II estimations vary widely and go as high as nearly 300 insurgent-government conflicts and at least two dozen were ongoing as of late 2011.

Reference

1. /analysis%2520of%2520insurgency.pdf