Explain the tactics employed in the counter insurgency operation

Rofiat opeyemi Yakub

18/sms09/080

IRD 214

200level

Answer

Insurgency is a protracted political-military struggle directed toward subverting or displacing the legitimacy of a constituted government or occupying power and completely or partially controlling the resources of

a territory through the use of irregular military forces and illegal political organizations. The common denominator for most insurgent groups is

their objective of gaining control of a population or a particular territory, including its resources. This objective differentiates insurgent groups from purely terrorist organizations. It is worth noting that identifying a movement as an insurgency does not convey a normative judgment on the legitimacy of the movement or its cause; the term insurgency is simply a description of the nature of the conflict. (See Appendix B for a detailed explanation of the derivation of this definition.)

Counterinsurgency—frequently referred to by the acronym COIN—is the combination of measures undertaken by a government to defeat an insurgency. Effective counterinsurgency integrates and synchronizes political, security, legal, economic, development, and psychological activities to create a holistic approach aimed at weakening the insurgents while bolstering the government’s legitimacy in the eyes of the population.

Insurgency Life Cycle

Each insurgency unfolds in a distinct manner, but most insurgencies develop along broad common stages. In general, an insurgency that survives its appearance as an armed challenger and has some degree of competence often goes through a period of growth as the counterinsurgent fails to identify the insurgent challenge and to develop an adequate response. Even given initial survival of an insurgent challenge, a swift

and determined government response and insurgent errors can push a movement into an early decline. If an insurgency continues to grow while the government is able to mount a credible response, the conflict can reach a dynamic plateau, that can last a number of years, the median duration being about 12 years. Moreover, the slope of the plateau can vary during the course of months or years, marginally favoring one side or the other. Exhaustion and errors by either side can push the conflict toward resolution, either on the battlefield or through negotiation.

OPERATIONAL VARIABLES

The tactics employed in counter insurgency

-Army doctrine uses eight interrelated operational variables toanalyze the operational environment. Known as PMESII-PT, the eight operational variables are—

POLITICAL

-The political variable describes the distribution ofresponsibility andpower at all levels of government. Since an insurgency is fundamentally a struggle for political power, the political environment in the HN country is critical. Attention should be paid not just to the formal political system (such as political parties and elected officials) but also to informal political systems (such as tribes, ethnic groups, and other centers of power). Long-term success in COIN is ultimately based on political efforts; all counterinsurgents must focus on the political impact of their actions. Therefore, tactical leaders may be expected to broker local political solutions.

-Host Nation (HN), US andcoalition political considerations drive the conduct ofCOIN operations. This is especially true concerning the involvement of the US Government and US public opinion. A major goal of most insurgencies is to influence US public opinion against US involvement as acounterinsurgent force. Successful counterinsurgents must therefore not only prevent insurgents from obtaining this goal, but also actively work to influence public opinion for the COIN mission.

1-18. Commanders must be prepared to operate within a broad range of political structures. The Host Nation’s form ofgovernment may range from a despotic dictatorship toa struggling democracy. Commanders at all levels, including platoon leaders and company commanders, need to recognize the importance of establishing and reinforcing the HN as the lead authority for all operations. This reinforces the legitimacy of the HN government.

MILITARY

-. This variable includes the military capabilities of all armed forces. Most COIN units will need to analyze the insurgency’s military forces (guerrillas), local militias, and the Host Nation security forces. Commanders should consider qualitative aspects, such as conscription or recruitment systems, economic basis (to include appropriations system), and position of forces in national and local government structure. Additional qualitative considerations are general organization, training and doctrine, efficiency, rapport with population, and the police role in the nation’s internal security. For example, a typical US brigade in Iraq might have to analyze a Sunni guerrilla force, a Shia guerrilla force, an Iraqi National Police brigade, an Iraqi Army brigade, the Iraqi local police, and a Sons of Iraq militia unit.

ECONOMIC

-The economic variable consists of the general economic categories of an Area of Operations (AO), such as energy; raw materials; government development policy; distribution of labor and labor policies; income distribution; national food distribution; free market or socialist interface and functions; consumption patterns; external investment, taxation policy; port authorities; movement of goods; consumer issues; border controls; foreign trade; tariffs; and graft or corruption. Enduring Qualities of Insurgency and Counterinsurgency

Many elements of insurgency have remained consistent across different regions for centuries and will probably continue to shape insurgency in the future. These fundamental tenets include:

- Insurgency is first and foremost a political struggle. It is unlikely to be waged or defeated by military means alone.

- Insurgents begin their struggle militarily weaker than the government and seek to avoid large-scale, direct, prolonged confrontations with the military. Likewise, they strive to make their existence known while keeping their structure, leaders, and fighters hidden.

- Insurgents rely on the population for support, but not all support needs to be—or is likely to be—gained from true sympathizers. Intimidation can secure the compliance of much of the population.

- Insurgents force the population to choose sides and try to provoke

the counterinsurgents into committing abuses that drive the neutral population toward the insurgents and solidify the loyalty of supporters.

- To defeat an external counterinsurgent, the insurgents need only to destroy the intervening country’s political will, not defeat it militarily.

Counterinsurgency methods vary from conflict to conflict, but the basic tenets of an effective counterinsurgency approach are likely to remain constant, including:

- Counterinsurgency is a struggle for legitimacy. The government seeks to prove that it can provide the basic necessities for the people and that it can do so better than the insurgents.

- The most basic need of the people is security. The counterinsurgent is responsible for protecting the population from the insurgents.

- The types of reforms that can resolve an insurgency—such as opening up the political system, granting greater rights to minorities, or reining in the security services—are sometimes more threatening than the insurgency itself to the target government’s hold on power, and, thus, the government sometimes seeks to contain rather than eliminate the insurgency.

The counterinsurgent seeks to separate civilians from insurgents through population control measures, including censuses, identification cards, checkpoints, and curfews.

- Intelligence is critical to finding the insurgents and separating them from the population.

- Military operations employ the minimum amount of force necessary to achieve their objectives while adhering to the country’s laws and cultural norms.

- Counterinsurgent forces benefit from being forward deployed and located among the population, and small-unit operations are preferable in order to match the insurgents’ mobility.

- Counterinsurgency requires unity of effort, including among agencies within a government and among countries operating in a coalition.

- The counterinsurgent can benefit from using supervised local forces, such as militias, to augment government troops, especially to gather intelligence and provide static defense.

- A foreign-led counterinsurgency will eventually have to pass the lead to indigenous forces.