**RD 214: INSURGENCY AND COUNTER-INSURGENCY**

**WEEK 10: *STRATEGIES OF COUNTER-INSURGENCY***

1. **INTRODUCTION**

Counter-Insurgency **(COIN)** is not a new concept in the International System. As long as man has sought means to **overturn, reform, separate** and **capitalize** for **personal reasons** on the **unfavourable political situation** of a **Ruling Authority/Government**, such **Authority/Government** had equally sought to hold on to power and **degrade, decimate** or **eliminate** any such **insurgent group**. Over the Millennium, **Ruling authorities** had created different **means** of **dealing** with **uprisings**, many of which were **focused** on **combating** the insurgents and **eliminating** their **source of support (without recourse to collateral damage)**. In the 21st Century, the **USA**, with its multitudes of military engagement, is seen as the leading authority on counter-insurgency. Counter- Insurgency **(COIN)** can be said to be **comprehensive civilian** and **military** **efforts** taken **to defeat** and **contain an insurgency simultaneously**. Also, it is undertaken to address the **root cause** or/and **effect** of an insurgency. It aims to build **popular support** for a government and to **suppress** or **co-opt** an insurgent group.

Despite the above clear line statement of purpose of what counter-insurgency is, and its strategies should be built around, it of note that, government through their zeal to eliminate the competitors (the insurgent) loss sight of the **end goal**. The **end goal** is to **win the battle** for the **hearts** and **minds** of citizens and **shift them away** from the **warm embrace of the Insurgents**. E.g. the Lord Resistance Army (LRA; an Insurgent group in Uganda) Vs. The Ugandan People Army (Government of President Museveni of Uganda), the government focused on the enemy and not the people, which cost them much.

**10.1. THE STRATEGIES OF COUNTER-INSURGENCY**

Strategies entail a blueprint of actions embarked upon to achieve a **specific** or **general** **objective**. It can be **short, middle, long term** or the combination of **two or three** of such. In the 21st Century, different state actors and scholars of Insurgency have proposed various strategies of counter-insurgency, many of which are doctrinally focus on directly combating the insurgents in the field. To **streamline** our **understanding** of **this course**, we will adopt **two group classification** of **counter-insurgency strategies**. These are the **Broad** and **Component** Strategies of Counter-Insurgency. **Note** this **does not limit** the **typologies** of the strategies of counter-insurgency to the above.

**10.2. BROAD STRATEGIES OF COUNTER INSURGENCY**

It's a classification of the Strategies of Counter-Insurgent. It exists as a typology that focuses on the **targets of action**s. Here, the **state** and **other subsidiary participants** direct their **efforts** to **target** a **specific group** or **individual**. The Broad Strategies accommodate the **multitude of tactics** devised via **counter-insurgency operations** under its headings. The Broad Strategies under this are;

1**) The Enemy Centric**

**2) The Population Centric,**

**and**

**3) The Comprehensive Approach**

* + 1. **ENEMY CENTRIC COUNTER-INSURGENCY STRATEGY**

The **Enemy Centric Strategy** has as its **fundament orientation**, **"First defeat the enemy, and all else will follow"**. It thereby **prioritizes** the defeat of the **Insurgency** before **any other counter-insurgency activity can take place**. It's a strategy that **targets counter-insurgency activities** on an insurgent group. It does this because it views counter-insurgency as **a contest** against **organized insurgent groups**. Its **weakness lies** in its **inability** to **contend** with **mature, sophisticated, non-hierarchical, cell-based and intangible (virtual dimension)** insurgents. Examples of conflict were the enemy centric focused strategy of **COIN** was used include; **Spartacus Vs. The Roman**, **The Assad Regime in Syria Vs. The Free Syria Army**, **the Soviet Vs. The Taliban**, **The LRA Vs. The Ugandan Government** etc.

* + 1. **POPULATION CENTRIC COUNTER-INSURGENCY STRATEGY**

Here, the **targeted focus** of the **counter-insurgency (COIN) activities** is on **Maintaining** or **Recovering** the **support** of the **Population** for a **Ruling Authority**. Although this strategy recognizes the **importance** of **direct security operations**, **it regards it as not the main effort** needed **to solve** an insurgency situation. Hence, its **doctrinal orientation** is sum-up as "**First Protect and Support the Population, and all others will follow"**. This strategy can be implemented **after** the **enemy centric approach**. It has as its **weakness** its **inability** to **access remote areas** and its **incapacity** to account for the **role of external support for insurgents**.

* + 1. **COMPREHENSIVE-COUNTER-INSURGENCY-STRATEGY**

This **COIN** strategy accounts for the **deployment** of **both enemy centric** and **Population centric approach**. It either does this **simultaneously** or **one after the other** with **the flexibility** to **switch** between **each other**. It is underpinned by the **political factors** in a state, which **impacts** on the **pursuit** of a **long term strategy** to **confront** the insurgent, **rebuild** a nation and **resolve** the **root cause** of the Insurgency. This strategy is **ideal** for **handling** an insurgency. Despite that, **a danger lies** in the **inability of ruling authorities** to **deploy** the **enemy or population-centric** approach when the situation demands appropriately. Also, a **challenge arises** in the ability of governments to **deployment both enemy centric** and **population-centric** approach in a **period were resources can not accommodate both**.

* 1. **COMPONENT STRATEGIES OF COUNTER-INSURGENCY**

A **component** is a **sub-category of a whole**. It is a **piece** that when **put together** forms a **full picture**. Components allow the **identification of underlying factors** as well as **singular issues**.

The Component Strategies of counter-insurgency **(COIN)** **address a select area of a society needs or lack of it**. It is **specifi**c in **its focus** and is not inhibited by the targets of a **COIN operation** or **activities**. Hence, it aids counter-insurgency operations by addressing or countering the gaps or weakness in that society that the insurgents exploit. Several of such component strategy are identified below.

* + 1. **POLITICAL BASED COUNTER-INSURGENCY STRATEGY**

It entails the **political plan** **formulated** to **address the Insurgency**. **Political factors** are **vital** in **addressing any insurgency**, as it **addresses** the **very nature of governance, power and the constitution**. Here, this strategy **aims** to provide **a framework** for **political leadership, reconciliation, reforms of government** etc. It is used to **signal** the **seriousness** all other counter-insurgency activities should be given. Such is because it shows **the depth of commitment** of the **political class** in **addressing issues**. Examples can be gleaned from the establishment of the North-East Development Commission (NEDC) to address issue fuelling the Boko Haram Insurgency North-Eastern Nigeria etc.

* + 1. **SECURITY CENTRIC COUNTER-INSURGENCY STRATEGY**

It is an **essential** strategy for **COIN**. Such is because it is developed and deployed along with the **Political** and **Economic approach (depending on the situation)**. It entails a **comprehensive plan** of how a **nations security sector** **(Military, Police, Oversight Mechanism, Judicial System, Intelligence Structure etc.)** is **deployed** to **deal with an insurgency** either by **degrading the insurgents or by protecting the Population.** In a **democratic society**, the security strategy **success** or **failure lies** on the **support it receives** from the **political class (political will and funding), Population** and the **competence** and **capacity of its commanders**. Examples here can be the establishment of the **Joint Task Force (JTF)** in Nigeria to deal with various **security challenges**, the **Counter-Insurgency Security Strategy** of the USA to **fight against Taliban in Afghanistan** etc.

* + 1. **ECONOMIC CENTRIC COUNTER-INSURGENCY STRATEGY**

This strategy is based on **government plans** to **address the economic lapses** in a **society** that **led or potentially lead** to the **Insurgency** in the **first place**. Here, issues such as **economic marginalization, unemployment, access to financial opportunities,** etc.**,** must be **addressed**. In **addressing these needs**, a **government generates confidence** in its **ability to provide essential services to its people** and **win-over the popular supports of citizens**.

* + 1. **INFORMATION CENTRIC COUNTER-INSURGENCY STRATEGY**

Here, **information is the core** of **COIN operations**. This strategy seeks to match **intelligence** (gather to understand the enemy) with **influence** (to promote the government cause) and the **strategic narrative** (that resonates with relevant audiences) with **physical actions**.

* + 1. **CONTROL CENTRIC COUNTER-INSURGENCY STRATEGY**

Here, this strategy allows for **an integrated approach** to **deal** with **counter-insurgency**. Also, for this approach **to be successful**, **an integrated plan** must be **established** and **deployed**. Its **functions** are **to assess the** **nature of the Insurgency**, **formulate policies to address the Insurgency** and **evaluate these policies effectiveness.**