

IRD 211: Strategies of Revolutionary Warfare

WEEK 1: Understanding the Components

Revolution, Counter-Revolution, Strategy, Tactic, War and Warfare

1.0. INTRODUCTION

Here, a conceptual understanding of the nuanced component that makes up the concepts in this course is broken down and presented. The intention is for easy identification and familiarization with the various component terms.

1.1. REVOLUTION

Revolution as a concept in International Relations can be defined in various context depending on the perceptions of scholars. Nonetheless, for **Samuel Huntington**, it can be said to be a rapid, fundamental and violent domestic change in the dominant values and myths of a society, be it in its political institutions, leadership, government activities and policies. While for **Theda Skocpol**, revolutions are rapid and basic transformation of a society, state and class structure as they are accompanied and in part carried out by class-based revolt from below. Also, **Katz** interpreted revolutions to involve the downfall of an old regime through violent means and its replacement by a new regime that attempts to establish a new political and social order. In all, a revolution is centred on change from an established

structure to a new one be it for better or worse, all with their inherent consequences and realities.

Revolutions can be of different types such as

- 1) Social Revolution**
- 2) Political Revolution**
- 3) Religious Revolutions**
- 4) Cultural Revolutions**
- 5) Scientific Revolutions**
- 6) Moral Revolutions.**
- 7) Health Revolutions. etc.**

Likewise, Revolutions can be characterized by four main traits; they are

- (1). Sudden**
- (2). Violent**
- (3). Require political replacement, and**
- (4). Lead to major replacement (political, socio-economic, etc.) changes to the system.**

For **Simon Hawkins** he discerned revolutions as being as much social as political change but warns of the dangers of revolutions to give rise to its own form of

oppression, he cites the French revolution as an example. It should be of note that in contrast to No. 2 in the above-stated traits of a revolution, **Mary Ellen O Connell** reiterates the view of some scholars that Revolutions can occur in non-violent forms. A moderate response to such opinion is that revolutions involve violence not necessarily from the revolutionary movement, but from the various system they canvass against, to change. In said situation, the power of established systems and their desire to maintain the status-quo will make their use of force to retain such a condition unavoidable.

1.2. COUNTER-REVOLUTION

As with conceptualizing a Revolution, Counter-Revolution as a key concept that occupies a central position in the political and social order is situated differently. Such depends on the view of its definers. Hence, Counter-Revolution can best be situated as the Antithesis to Revolution. It is the concerted effort by an established or entrenched system to dissuade, deter or decimate efforts to change a status quo situation. Most times, we find that the target of revolutions as possessing a disproportionate amount of power and resources than the revolutionary elements, such accounts for the high level of success recorded in Counter-Revolutionary operations. For some authors, they view counter-revolutions as order (maintenance of a previously established system against a revolution or brought down by one) and revolutions as anti-order.

1.3. STRATEGY

Strategy can be defined as the art and science of planning and marshalling resources for their most efficient use. It can also be viewed as a high-level plan which has several sub-set (e.g. tactics, siegecraft, logistics, etc.), used to achieve one or more goals under conditions of certainty or uncertainty. Another lens view of what a strategy encompasses is how ends (goals) will be achieved by means (resources) either intentionally or by being organically formed from organized activities. Also, the concept can be interpreted as a blueprint, tactics and/or devices used to accomplish a predetermined objective or goal. Likewise, it could be viewed as all level of calculation of objectives and resources within acceptable bounds of risks to create more favourable outcomes that exist by chances or at the hands of others. Yet another definition is as a plethora of objectives yearning for tools or medium to achieve them which are backed by a consciously defined or formatted plan and the power of supporting structures to meet the end desired.

In carrying out strategic operations, actors must be conversant with the following:

Formulation Stage: which entails analyzing the environment or situation, making a diagnosis of the situation and developing a guiding policy to achieve objectives.

AND

Implementation Stage: At this stage, it involves carrying out the action plan arrived at during the Formulation Stage.

1.4. TACTICS

This is the means by which a strategy is carried out in pursuit of an overall goal. Tactics imply planned, and ad hoc activities meant to deal with the demands of the moment. It presages a move from one milestone to the other in pursuit of the overall goals. It connotes a method that is used to achieve something or the science of planning the arrangement and the use of resources to achieve strategic goals and objectives. Tactics differ from strategy, while tactics encompass an action aimed at achieving a goal, strategies portend a set of actions used to achieve overall objectives. In summary, tactics are short specific action used when applying strategic choices.

1.5. WAR

It entails organized sets of hostilities against intended targets. It can also be perceived as a conflict situation between actors in the international system.

1.6. WARFARE

This is the exclusive application of genuine violence of some considerable scale that is carried out over a period of time with an objective. It is a mechanism of achieving

political agenda as well as it serves as a nexus that can determine the conduct and outcome of wars. Warfare can be classified by Objectives (Limited and Unlimited), Terrain (Land, Air, Water, etc.), Generation (First, Second, Third and Fourth Generations), Equipment (Chemical, Biological, Electronic etc.), Stages (Core and Peripheral) and Strategic doctrine.

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