

IRD 211: Strategies of Revolutionary Warfare

WEEK 2: *Understanding Revolutionary Warfare*

Definition, Evolution, Typologies, Causes, Aims and Objectives

2.0. INTRODUCTION

2.1. REVOLUTIONARY WARFARE

It should be of note that there is hardly any consensus and greater disagreement on every aspect of revolutionary warfare which includes its definitions. Such presents a scenario where there is conceptual cross-identification of revolutionary warfare with Guerilla Warfare, Partisan Warfare, Terrorism etc.

Hence, revolutionary warfare as a concept has been defined variable. For **SEDERBURG**, it connotes a campaign of violence by a political movement representing an alternative to a current regime. Such calls to mind the facets that revolutionary warfare will most likely be fueled by revolutionary movements, who can mobilize sufficient segments of the population to threaten the system in power. Although violence is not a compulsory aspect of revolutionary warfare, the use of violence is necessitated from the desire to cause a change in the system when all other means has failed. It does not mean violence or military actions are revolutionary warfare but constrains them to an aspect of revolutionary warfare.

2.2. EVOLUTION OF REVOLUTIONARY WARFARE

The historical origin of revolutionary warfare goes back millennia, but what can be identified as revolutionary warfare in modern contexts goes back centuries. This modern contexts of revolutionary warfare are relatively recent in historical development largely because it became associated with Modernity, Industrialization and Imperialism. Starting from the 16th century, it became frequent for new strands of warfare to change the political system began to be introduced. It resulted from a shift from conventional warfare to revolutionary warfare as an efficient and less costly method for creating change. The historical origins of revolutionary warfare were more pronounced with the philosophical contributions of scholars and events in the 20th and 21st century.

Such, philosophical contribution to the modern notion of revolutionary warfare include, those of **Karl Marx** and **Friedrich Engels**. They proposed the mobilization of the masses (as strategic guidance) to facilitates change. Also, contribution to the intellectual development of the modern concept of revolutionary warfare is the works of **Vladimir Lenin** and **Leon Trotsky**. They proffered the need for a strong organization of revolutionary movement as a tactical consideration of revolutionary warfare. Adding to the fundamental norm of the contemporary revolutionary warfare was the inputs of **Mao Tse-Tung** who believed revolutionary warfare was a

protracted struggle of the strength of will and political consideration over military action.

2.3. TYPOLOGIES OF REVOLUTIONARY WARFARE

- 1) PROPAGANDA
- 2) GUERILLA WARFARE
- 3) TERRORISM
- 4) INSURGENCY
- 5) CYBER WARFARE
- 6) MASS PROTEST
- 7) CIVIL DISTURBANCE

2.4. CAUSES OF REVOLUTIONARY WARFARE

Here, revolutionary warfare can be caused by

PERCEPTION: which entails a belief by the populace of the illegitimacy of a regime or system.

DISAPPOINTMENT: widespread withdrawal of public confidence and support in government due to a blow in the condition of life.

FAILURE OF THE GOVERNMENT: Vacillation, incompetence, incoherence and failure of the government to fulfil their agreement with citizens

ECONOMIC FACTORS:

It entails conditions that worsened the economic fortunes of a people which breeds in them a feeling of deprivation with the acceptance of the myth or ideology of a change to the current system.

POLITICAL FACTORS:

Such entails condition that worsens the political fortunes of a people. And so, said conditions breeds in them a feeling of deprivation with the existing order in power. Hence, they a predisposed to the acceptance of the myth or ideology of a change to the current system.

2.5. AIMS OF REVOLUTIONARY WARFARE

Revolutionary warfare aim is to destroy a targeted existing society or system and its institution by replacing them with a completely new structure. As such, the aims of revolutionary warfare defines the end to be achieved. Such ends can be in terms of political or social goals.

2.6. OBJECTIVES OF REVOLUTIONARY WARFARE

Here, the main objective of Revolutionary warfare is its political goals and objectives, which seeks to overthrow the social, political and economic order. Such is done because a revolution wants to topple the old order. And so, it does this by

seeking to separate the people from their government. Likewise, it seeks to destroy the legitimacy of a government (or expose its illegitimacy), create dissent and dissatisfaction and concentrate on the people as the battlefield. Hence, revolutionary warfare has **political, economic, social** and **psychological** objectives.