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Command and Control within Guerilla Warfare

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Abstract

The future of battle won't be fought with tanks and artillery in a force on force manner; it will be fought in an urban environment where the friend or foe isn't easily identified (Graham, 2005). Guerrilla warfare is a collective group of individuals, assembled to fight for a common cause, which increases the vulnerability and difficulties to conventional forces when combating personnel in unfamiliar territory. This unconventional command and control aspect of guerilla warfare can be dynamically reconfigured to operate as one or more independent branches capable of quickly striking conventional forces. Command and control within guerilla forces depend heavily on the communication and political hubs located within urban areas. Gaining access to future guerilla members located within the community and internationally can be influenced by the media.

Command and Control within Guerilla Warfare

Within the constructs of this essay, I will attempt to explain the how command and control within the guerilla organization increases the difficulty on opposing forces in distinguishing guerilla fighters from noncombatants. Readers may not understand the rationale of using the unconventional means of guerilla forces to fight against their enemies, but I will provide examples of why numerous poor and underdeveloped countries lacking resources are forced into resorting to guerilla warfare tactics. These tactics provide a means of defeating a conventional occupying force in order to maintain sovereignty. The command and control schemes along with the advantages gained using methods noted will be explored.

In 1849, Karl Marx stated, a nation, fighting for its liberty, ought not to adhere rigidly to the accepted rules of warfare. Mass uprisings, revolutionary methods, guerilla bands everywhere; such are the only means by which a small nation can hope to maintain itself against an adversary superior in numbers and equipment. By their use a weaker force can overcome its stronger and better organized opponent (Miksche, 1950, p. 25).

The Invisible Command and Control Structure

The Website for the Insurgent Desire (2005), describes the fundamentals of command and control within a guerilla establishment. The fundamental base within the command and control element of the guerrilla network serves as the epicenter of the organization. This covert structure network encompasses the hearts, minds and core strength from its people. Opponents of the guerilla element cannot afford to underestimate the capabilities of the enemy based on conventional warfare doctrine or assumptions. The command and control structure has a

seamless leadership hierarchy that doesn't reflect the lethality of the guerilla fighter or its ability to create an organized armed struggle.

The success of guerilla warfare depends on a shared political goal and command, the structure within the guerrillas organization is from the bottom up. Survival of the organization depends on diversified orders that can be executed even if the leader is incapacitated. Many times orders have already been issued throughout the nation to call upon the people to form guerilla units both for local defense and for combat anywhere. Therefore, this type of grass roots organizational set-up defined by the unconventional methods of creating guerilla forces using both fear and anxiety as a rally cry to summon individuals from diverse backgrounds, such as; farmers and common workers within the community to take up arms and fight to the death. During the Operation Iraqi Freedom, the dynamics within the command and control involve hostile civilians that have transitioned into insurgents, which allow them to quickly mix with the population.

Military Options

Guerilla warfare may be the only option a group of individuals may have to attempt to try and maintain its sovereignty based on the financial status and geographic location of the country. A leader of the resistance must ensure followers believe in the struggle and are willing to spill their own blood for the cause. The lack of money to buy weapons and equipment would prove to be detrimental to a group of people desperate to start a revolution. However, success may be possible if the people believe in the leader of the resistance, know the terrain, and understand the concept of fighting a small scale war against conventional forces using limited resources.

Maneuver

A Guerrilla fighter is politically motivated, armed civilian whose principal weapon is not his rifle or machete, but his relationship to the community, the nation in and for which he fights. Guerrillas have the initiative and can choose the time and place to attack the organized power of a stronger opponent (Davies, 2002, p. 44).

At the same time, the guerrilla often has the advantage because he has the ability to refuse combat and fade from the battlefield. Although many civilians become targets when guerilla forces mix with the population, by initiating devastating attacks, guerilla fighters could expose the vulnerabilities of the powerful to the people. These guerilla actions serve as a rally cry to future fighters that may be drawn to the bloodshed created by a detonated bomb at a high traffic area; collateral damage within the civilian population is considered acceptable in order to grab the attention of the conventional force.

Command and Control Strategies

The asymmetrical battlefield, terrain, and possible guerilla fighter safe houses located within territories that contain both combatant and civilians. The command and control element of a suicide bomber is determined through recruitment, rehearsals and the detonation within the kill zone; this action is normally difficult to trace because evidence is destroyed and the orders aren't easily tracked. Also, when guerilla fighters use civilians as shields, deliberately targeting innocent women and children, commandeering churches and medical facilities, and wearing familiar public service uniforms, greatly increase the likelihood of civilian casualties.

Also, these types of indiscriminate attacks create vulnerabilities within the conventional forces structure when locating the enemy and the origin of command and control. Tracking the

guerilla fighters' base of operations becomes harder to find in a crowd; normal citizens risk death for taking your side. The aftermath of the detonated bomb affects the innocent victim families of the attack and may persuade them to join the resistance movement to avoid losing any other family members.

Being defensive is how the guerrilla strategically fights, but as seen during WWII, when the French Marquis fought the Germans, they can also conduct an offensive war against military or governments jeopardizing their sovereignty as targets for a strong psychological impact. Guerrilla factions are not capable of defeating or destroying a well-equipped enemy. Karsner states, "The fact that the guerrilla selects military and government targets differentiates him from the terrorist, who generally selects noncombatant civilian and nongovernmental targets for a different kind of psychological impact" (Karsner, 2005, p. 59).

Opposing View

One can oppose the command and control element of guerilla warfare because fighters don't adhere to Geneva Convention rules that regulate combat or the treatment of prisoners of war. By using members of the community which include; women and children engaged and utilized as elements of surprise to terrorize conventional forces, provide an unfair advantage to the guerilla fighters. Unsuspecting Soldiers are victimized and targeted while on patrol or just performing a civil service to help the community. This type of command and control doesn't concern itself with how the orders flow or who accomplishes the missions, everyone that doesn't share the same ideology or won't take up arms for the cause is considered an enemy combatant.

Conclusion

In conclusion, you can see that maintaining sovereignty of a country using guerilla warfare tactics require a strong command and control element. Command and control is

important to guerilla forces civilians for forces for two main reasons. First, guerilla fighters aren't easily detected among the civilian population which makes it difficult for to track those loyal to a particular resistance movement. But most importantly, poor underdeveloped countries can effectively fight against conventional forces using proven techniques in order to maintain their right to sovereignty.

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