**Irregular Warfare**

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**Challenges of Executing Mission Command during Irregular Warfare**

           In a bid to be successful in the political and uncertain conflicts, which is likely to conquer the international security environment in the impending decades, will need a framework that strikes a balance in the relationships between the military leaders and civilians (Kitzen, 2020). In this way, they will effectively use their different strengths. The challenges are poised to demand well-integrated, comprehensive government approaches, close collaboration with the host governments and allies, and patience amid the strategies.

           Irregular warfare complicates unequal dialogue between the civilians and military leaders. In this case, the civilian leaders have the true and absolute power but must operationalize their intervention in military issues as part of prudence instead of a principle (Carrick et al., 2016). For instance, the wars witnessed in Afghanistan and Iraq have exposed the irregular warfare, which is largely political, locally intense and protracted, and defies the traditional notion of how the civilian leaders and the military can make a contribution to the overall effort in war (Majchút, 2018). As such, one of the main challenges of irregular warfare is the metrics for measuring progress. Even though there is no consensus about the practicability of creating the measurement metrics, there is an unrelenting political pressure to make progress that can be seen and measured in a particular way (Kitzen, 2020). Usually, most efforts of collecting data emphasize the number of various forms of kinetic events, significant political milestones achieved including elections, and input resources like money, personnel, and material. None of these metrics isolates clearly what is required in terms of results or outcomes.

           Another key challenge is choosing leaders in warfare. In such times of great wars, there is a need for individuals who can create stability and reconstruct operations seamlessly. At the same time, it is difficult to identify ways of producing civilian leaders capable of asking the right and most complicated questions (Linderman, 2016). Besides, it is challenging to form integrated methods and strategies. The most important aspect of succeeding in irregular warfare is formidable professional relationships as opposed to organizational fixes. This creates another big problem (Linderman, 2016). To create this vital relationship between the military leaders and civilian leaders, it is imperative to focus on forming new doctrines intended to explain the conflated authority lanes. With a good relationship in place, the leaders develop a mutual trust and shared understanding, something integral in the quest to emerge victorious in irregular warfare.

           Still, conflated lanes of authority is a major problem while executing mission command. In reality, unending irregular conflicts result in new challenges for Leadership and general civil-military interactions (Carrick et al., 2016). Persistent wars in Iraq and Afghanistan elaborately explain these challenges. Like in the case of Iraq, the conflict began with a short conventional war that depended on the great military force to overcome a ruthless state and overthrow its leader. With the approval of the Congress civilian leaders, the Commander in Chief ordered an action, and the military conducted the operation with ease and success. Even so, after achieving the original goals, the conflict in Iraq advanced into counterinsurgency (Kitzen, 2020). Likewise, as the war in Afghanistan demonstrates, in an uncertain war against the non-state and asymmetric threat, the traditional authority lanes do not define the actions of the political leaders charged with the responsibility of containing the conflict, the military commanders executing it, and the civilians taking charge of humanitarian help, diplomacy, and reconstruction of war.

           The war in Iraq became successful based on the objective of removing the regime. However, as it advanced beyond this initial phase, the civil-military relationship started to fall apart as the war devolved into a counterinsurgency action. Starting from 2007 with the surge, a dramatic resumption of the harmonious relationship marked a strong collaboration between the military authorities and the US civilians. Also, there was a more effective reconstruction of the political, military, and diplomatic strategies of achieving peace and stability. Even though there are several questions why such kind of cooperation was not witnessed in the early stages, the surge gave vital insights on the king of cohesion and communication required during irregular warfare military officials and civilian officers. Here, the military officials have their traditional roles of applying force extending to peacekeeping and nation-building operations. On the flip side, the civilian officers have the dominant responsibility of developing a peace framework, stable governance, and diplomatic relationships that can foster sustainable US national interests.

           While executing mission command in irregular warfare, there is a possibility of experiencing command and leadership challenges. For example, the leadership and command complexities that are witnessed in the cases of Iraq and Afghanistan give new rich experiences on how to treat the civil-military relationships in the process of armed nation-building, a concept that can be widely termed as "irregular warfare" (Beccaro, 2018). In a way, there is a lot of expectation from the soldiers, where they are asked to assume extra responsibilities more than their regular routine. Besides being required to use violence, the officers should bring a wide range of peacekeeping and nation-building techniques to the field. Contemporary warfare has evolved into something more than finding peace and stability during conflicts. The soldiers' ultimate goal is to obtain overall military operations that suit the civil-military efforts or how effective they are resolving the conflicts in tandem with the national guidelines. There are both difficulties and significance of setting goals and objectives.

**Challenges of Managing Stress during Irregular Warfare**

Whether the military officers choose to accept it or not, stress is an unavoidable part of the soldiers' life. Stress marks the life of the officers on the battlefield and personal relationships. The officers experience different stress forms, such as physical, emotional, and mental stressors (Ucko, 2018). While stress has become a common aspect of irregular warfare, it is important to find ways of managing it. However, apart from recognizing the causes of stress, the capacity to identify the challenges of managing this stress is more important. One of the first steps in understanding stress management obstacles during warfare is the analysis of Lazarus' Model of Stress. According to this model, stress occurs when people have exhausted their resources or running out of supply (Ucko, 2018). Because the resources were being given out to meet the warfare demands, they get depleted over time, with no more to offer. In such cases, stress becomes an effect instead of a cause of the problem. In other words, deficient knowledge about stress and its causes is the first and most recognized challenge in the bid to manage stress.

           Further, it elusive to combat stress in irregular warfare since the symptoms are proving to be a big challenge in individuals' attempts to manage stress. In reality, there are several symptoms that can be interpreted differently or may be linked to other conditions or medical illnesses (Ucko, 2018). In most cases, soldiers experience physical exhaustion because of the array of activities that must be performed to execute their missions. This can result in extreme tiredness and eventually affect emotional and mental health (Ucko, 2018). Given this, when the military officers are experiencing stress related to the warfare engagements, it is easy for the symptoms to be linked to other stress, such as conditions, which are not present in the field of conflict. Eventually, the symptom is addressed but not the stress as the major cause of the problem. Still, it is difficult to manage stress because it has various manifestations in different people. Consequently, it is hard to diagnose stress or identify the root causes. There has never been a universal or widely accepted way of explaining how stress affects individuals and proposing strategies for managing it. Accordingly, every person creates a unique approach for addressing stress, while the process usually needs a blend of at least two techniques to achieve desirable results. This has more complicated to overcome stress in warfare.

**How Leaders may have to adjust their Leadership Attribute of Presence during Irregular Warfare**

          For leaders to be more effective in warfare, they need to adjust their approach in line with the mission, organization, and situation. The constant change during warfare affects combat activities and peacetime. The anticipated resources fail to materialize, and adversaries turn out in unexpected ways (Rosinha et al., 2017). The leaders, staff, and commanders predict potential changes and continuously monitor progress to ensure everything is on track. It is the leaders who are responsible for the elements impacting the dynamics of Leadership. The only unchanging variables in warfare are the leader, the led, and the situation.

          The army leaders have a dominant role in influencing others to achieve their set missions. In warfare, a leader can take charge when given responsibility, assume roles, or act as an informal leader among the team members. Military leaders are expected to inspire individuals in both internal and external the chain of command towards a particular action or reshape their perception where necessary (Rosinha et al., 2017). All members can be in a position to lead others, whether informally or formally and irrespective of their ranks. Leaders who adjust their attributes to adapt to the situations' dynamics are well-placed to be successful in the warfare missions. Even though leaders may have their preferences and qualities they have stood with ever since, they must adapt to the warfare requirements and demonstrate only the attributes required by the army guidelines; army values, empathy, discipline, and humility.

Most of the leadership attributes are developed for years from childhood to adulthood. Individuals are at liberty to choose and hold onto their values, but upon taking the service oath, they have to live and conduct themselves in line with army values (Rosinha et al., 2017). The army values encompass various principles, processes, and standards that are deemed necessary for service. This means, irrespective of their attributes, leaders, during irregular warfare, must demonstrate loyalty, respect, integrity, honor, selfless service, and personal courage. Meanwhile, values and beliefs affect how people think and act. Individuals join the military from backgrounds with various personal beliefs and values that exist within the legal framework of ethical behavior. The cultural, upbringing, and religious differences are evident among the soldiers participating in irregular warfare. This diversity is beneficial for a collective course of action. Given this, leaders must learn how to treat all people with the utmost respect and dignity appropriate for them.

Demonstrating ethical behavior is critical in achieving the mission of irregular warfare. The leaders must adjust their attributes to accommodate the ethical requirements prescribed by the state commanders. This is based on the idea that unethical behavior may affect the cohesion and reduce the cooperation and relationships between the members, making them succumb to failure. One important part of ethical behavior is ethical reasoning. To be a military leader does not imply that one is conversant with the military rules and policies. Ethical reasoning helps leaders to adjust their actions and identify moral solutions to different problems. Simultaneously, ethical reasoning must be witnessed in the planning, preparation, execution, and assessment of operations. Military leaders are required to show empathy in an irregular war when relating with another person's condition. Empathy needs that people develop a deeper understanding and anticipate what other individuals are going through, which helps them be careful when taking actions and decisions (Rosinha et al., 2017). Empathic leaders know others are affected, and they take the initiative to understand others at a deeper level. In other words, irregular warfare calls for desperate actions, and leaders can be forced to act out of the ordinary. Because leaders perform various operations during warfare, they must adjust their personal attributes to fit the guidelines and policies outlined.

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