



Che Guevera's Concept of Guerilla Warfare

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Abstract

The guerilla warfare, which liberated many people from the clutches of the imperialists. Che Guevera was the strict and successful follower of the guerilla warfare which led to the liberation of cuba. He expressed the characteristics, techniques, phases, strategies, limitations and the goal of guerilla warfare. He also stressed that guerilla warfare is for people and it should have the support of the people.

Keywords: *warfare, guerillas, terrain, revolution, strategy, ambush, liberation.*

Introduction

For victory of every revolution there is a need for strategic warfare. This plays a crucial role advancing the movement. When it comes to the revolutionary battles between the strongly armed government and the normal people, the strategy will become the central nerve of the movement. Guerilla warfare is one of the most effective strategies for the less powerful army. This warfare was used by many revolutions and became successful, the China revolution by Mao is the best example. Che Guevara, who came to cuba from argentina, joined the cuban revolutionists , especially fidel castro. They opted for guerilla warfare, which made the revolution successful. Che Guevara followed strict principles and also compiled the experiences and concepts of guerilla warfare in the book 'La Guerra de Guerrillas'. He advised and asserted the principle of guerilla warfare in it.

Requirements for revolution

Che Guevara believed that irregular, people armies can defeat a professional army. He saw the Cuban Revolution as proof that these forces were capable of winning a conflict. He opposed the idea of holding off on starting a revolution until all the necessary circumstances were met. He thought that the guerrilla movement itself might establish the prerequisites for a revolution that would be victorious.

Che Guevara stressed that a successful revolutionary battle should initially focus on rural regions rather than cities, especially in Latin America with its enormous rural population. He argues that the guerrilla group acts as a catalyst, encouraging individuals to take up guns in order to overturn the government, rather than taking power on its own.

The People's War

According to Che, a guerrilla war is a battle of the people against the forces of the ruling oligarchies and their foreign allies, spearheaded by a combat vanguard i.e. guerrilla force. He emphasised that the rural populace's support is essential to the success of guerilla warfare. He asserted that if the populace did not support the guerrilla army, then it would be nothing more than a roving gang of bandits.

Guerrillas have to portray themselves as warriors who are going to fight the injustices of the current societal structure. Che noted that focus on land reform is needed to gain the support of the rural populace.

Che Guevara thought that a guerrilla army might gain their support by standing up for the rural people's complaints, most notably the concentration of land ownership in the hands of a few elites. He stated that guerrilla combatants should be austere, to practise strict self-control, and to act morally. The goal of this action was to gain the respect and admiration of the community.

Guevara maintained that fighters ought to offer the rural population social, economic, and technical support. The objectives of this strategy were to establish a strong rapport, gain the peasantry's trust, and instil in them the value of armed conflict.

Characteristics of an guerillas

According to Che beyond physical characteristics, moral and psychological traits are crucial for a successful guerilla. This involves a strong dedication to their responsibilities. In order to survive the worst climatic circumstances, guerrilla fighters need to be flexible. Because guerilla life entails extreme privations, such as a lack of basic requirements including food, water, appropriate clothes, shelter, and medical care, this flexibility is essential.

He asserted that being constantly mobile is an important part of living as a guerilla. Long marches and crossing terrain that is difficult and unusual for regular people.

The duties of guerillas

According to Che, the most fascinating thing that happens in a guerilla fighter's everyday existence is warfare. It is the pinnacle of their lives as well as the source of the most happiness. Guerrillas view combat as a tool of achieving their goal, which is presumably the growth of the revolutionary cause.

Guerrillas must carry out their fighting duties without hesitation or weakness. Che stresses the significance of not expecting anything in return and not giving the enemy any scope. This emphasises how intense and committed guerilla warfare is.

Che stresses the humanitarian treatment of enemy soldiers who are injured or captured, even if guerrillas are supposed to punish their opponents with no mercy during combat. The only exception would be if these troops had committed crimes serious enough to merit a trial and maybe even an execution.

Guerrilla Warfare Techniques

According to Che Guevara, the hit and run method is the mainstay of guerilla warfare. To demoralise the adversary, guerrillas attack when they catch them off guard, vanish fast to avoid reprisals, and then repeat the operation. He talked about how ambush is a useful strategy. Guerrillas may deliver terrible casualties by striking the enemy when they're moving, preferably when they're in a vulnerable position like going down a ravine. The "minute tactic" is another technique which involves encircling an enemy column with small units and engaging the enemy alternatively from several locations, is another method. This demoralises and throws the opposition off balance.

Guevara cautioned against allowing the enemy to encircle the guerrilla force since this is a useful tactic for eliminating the guerrilla presence in a particular region.

Guerrilla Warfare Phases

In the survival phase, assuring the guerrilla force's survival is the main tactic used in the early phases of guerilla warfare. Guerrillas limit their offensive actions to surprise attacks and steer clear of direct conflict with stronger opposing forces.

In the expansion phase, the guerrilla group grows as it escapes the adversary and recruits new members, methodically intimidating and disheartening the enemy's soldiers.

In the territorial expansion phase, Small-scale sabotage is carried out by guerrilla units when they penetrate enemy territory. The indigenous people have to be instilled and the original base needs to be strengthened at the same time.

The last final confrontation stage is a traditional battle with defined fronts in which guerrilla columns unite together to confront the enemy's forces. The people's army appears and advances on the cities in an attempt to topple the government.

Guerrilla Warfare Limitations

Guevara recognized the need for local support and also cautioned against putting too much trust on the peasantry because of their inclination to talk with friends and family. Some people may even give information to the enemy in order to avoid being mistreated. Although sabotage was seen as a successful strategy, Guevara advised fighters to think about the societal ramifications of each act of devastation. It is important to prevent needless suffering among the urban and rural populace.

Guevara makes it clear that guerrilla combat is not enough to bring about total triumph on its own. He notes that although it is an excellent first step, in order to be successful in the end, it must transform into a conventional conflict. Guevara emphasises the importance of the transition of guerilla warfare into a conventional conflict. This change is essential to defeat the adversary completely. While guerrilla warfare may work in some situations, it might not be sufficient to take on and defeat a conventional army that is well-prepared and well-organised.

Guevara's viewpoint regards guerrilla warfare as the initial stage of a more extensive national liberation struggle. This suggests that although guerilla warfare is necessary to start the conflict, it should open the door for a longer-term and more conventional military effort. The underlying premise is that the enemy can only be totally vanquished by switching to a conventional war. This shift most certainly entails a larger-scale, better-coordinated military confrontation.

Ultimate goal

The defeat of the opposing army is one of the ultimate aims of revolutionary guerrilla warfare, according to Che Guevara. This suggests a strategic emphasis on confronting and defeating the armed forces working against the revolutionary cause. Guevara claims that establishing political power in the name of the people is the ultimate goal, not only winning wars. This is consistent with national emancipation as a larger objective.

Conclusion

The success of the Cuban revolution created a great impact on the world. And also gave a jolt of energy to other people's revolutions. The concepts of revolution, guerilla warfare, and social justice that Che Guevara advocated have endured. His ideas were taken up by several revolutionary organisations in Latin America and elsewhere, who tried to imitate the Cuban model. Che's ideals continued to be relevant in addressing social inequities and rallying support from the public, as seen by the rise of movements like the Zapatistas in Mexico in the mid 1990s. Che Guevera became a symbol for the revolution and inspiration for the people.

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