

PEOPLE: A TOOL FOR CIVIL CONSIDERATION

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A Need for a Better Tool

Commenting upon guerilla warfare nearly 60 years ago, Mao Tse-Tung declared that “the guerilla swims in the sea of the people.” His metaphor has since characterized revolutionary war fought by insurgents who find sanctuary, support, and protection from the population they seek to violently change. Today, the contemporary operational environment in which the U.S. Army fights is one centered inside of large urban centers, fought against small radical groups, and is surrounded by large populations of varying cultures. To separate and kill the insurgent and terrorist from the surrounding population, and to assist with building the concept of a national will in the legitimate host nation authorities, current Army leaders need a better tool to understand a given civilian population and its culture. Operations in a violent, uncertain, noncontiguous environment require more leadership at the brigade level and below to analyze the culture of their environments and incorporate their conclusions into a synchronized plan. This analytical tool must not be a checklist, must have relevance down to squad level in terms of understanding and applicability, and must enable the individual doing the analysis to directly link their conclusions to the application of combat power. When executing full spectrum operations, leaders who analyze the civilian population using the PEOPLE (population perceptions, ethnic dynamics, organizations of influence, patterns, leaders and influencers, economic environment) technique will more effectively focus their firepower, maneuver, protection, information, and leadership to achieve the desired effects of their mission.

ASCOPE & Its Uses

When analyzing civilians and their culture, many units use the all-encompassing Civil Affairs doctrinal tool known as ASCOPE (areas, structures, capabilities, organizations, people, events). The current doctrinal framework of ASCOPE found in FM 3-05.401 is arguably a division and corps level tool meant for usage by Civil Affairs teams. This opinion is reinforced by the Civil Affairs Planning and Execution Guide (GTA 41-01-001). It states that



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A Soldier with the 155th Brigade Combat Team talks with a civilian in Diyara, Iraq.

“the best use of CA is against key strategic or operational targets that require unique skills and capabilities of CA forces.”

Areas are “key localities or aspects of the terrain within a commander’s battlespace that are not normally thought of as militarily significant” (GTA 41-01-001;5). These civil areas allow commanders to identify key aspects of their battle space and assist in nonlethal targeting for Civil Affairs teams. Structures refer to critical civil services and infrastructure that may be identified as high payoff targets (HPTs) by the unit commander. Capabilities are “existing or required indigenous capabilities to sustain the populace and infrastructure” (GTA 41-01-001;5). Understanding capabilities of the area allow commanders to identify public safety and host nation governmental services that require Civil Affairs interface to assist the local population in sustaining themselves. Organizations are groups that may or may not be affiliated with the host nation government and can refer to key international governmental organizations and non-governmental organizations working in the area of operation. People in the ASCOPE mnemonic refers to “all the civilians one can expect to encounter in and outside of the AO” (GTA 41-01-001;5). Though very broad in definition, understanding the civilian makeup assists commanders in defining key personnel and their linkages to the resident population. Events are “civilian events that may affect the military mission” (GTA 41-01-001;5). For example, the Civil

Affairs guide accurately suggests that planting and harvesting season, as well as elections and riots can dramatically affect military operations.

This Civil Affairs method of analysis has been used as a quick reference for commanders when conducting mission analysis to define their battlespace and determine constraints, but does not lend itself easily to the development of tactics, techniques, and procedures that can be used to focus combat power at the lower tactical levels. Moreover, current operations suggest that squad leaders, platoon leaders, and company commanders are the ones analyzing the civilian communities in their areas of operation, making quick decisions, and adapting their maneuver plans to the cultural issues not addressed by their higher headquarters. They are in fact doing these actions oftentimes without the assistance of trained Civil Affairs teams. There is little evidence to suggest that these small unit leaders are even using ASCOPE, or any other discernable tool for that matter to assist in their missions. The ASCOPE model, while a very good tool for broad understanding of an area and its population, really doesn't lend itself to easy understanding and rapid applicability of combat power for small unit leaders.

These small unit leaders need a tool that is agile enough to be used in any cultural environment and can be integrated into the current model of troop leading procedures for the direct application of combat power.

PEOPLE

Studying a foreign culture for military necessity is not meant to better cultural awareness to promote "consideration of others" training in our combat forces; rather, it should expedite the violent destruction of our adversaries and the restoration of peace and stability to the civilian population as a whole. Using the PEOPLE model should allow leaders to accomplish both of these tasks. The PEOPLE model used for cultural analysis is not intended as a radical departure from preexisting doctrinal analysis (ASCOPE), which higher headquarters will undoubtedly pass down to company level commanders through their intelligence staffs. The acronym PEOPLE stands for:

- Population Perceptions
- Ethnic dynamics
- Organizations of influence
- Patterns
- Leaders and Influencers
- Economic Environment

The integration of the PEOPLE tool should be used by leaders at brigade level and below in mission analysis (the "C" – civil considerations portion of METT-TC) and can be directly linked to course of action development. In this manner, leaders can make their conclusions about the civilian population found in their analysis of the mission and link them into their relative combat power analysis when formulating a course of action. This tool will allow leaders to quickly determine the key groups and decision makers in their areas, identify the trends and patterns exhibited, and assess the resources available to leverage this knowledge in terms of protection, leadership, maneuver, firepower, and



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A Soldier with the 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment talks with a group of civilians from Tal Afar, Iraq.

information. It will also inform small unit leaders as they plan to aggressively destroy enemy cadres and deny enemy influence and gain access to sensitive areas and neutral population groups. Leaders should also use it to focus and collect intelligence and protect their force and the forces of the legitimate host nation authority from harm. Leaders may apply the PEOPLE method of analysis as a means to identify and mitigate risks and accomplish the mission.

Just as using the OCOKA (observation and fields of fire, cover and concealment, obstacles and movement, key terrain and avenues of approach) tool for terrain analysis, the sequence leaders use to analyze culture can vary. For example, before analyzing other aspects of culture, leaders may choose to analyze "Patterns" first in order to achieve an historical perspective of the people in their areas of operation.

Population Perceptions. The population within a prescribed area of responsibility may have several different groups, both ethnically and politically. It is important for leaders to understand the general perceptions of each group towards the United States, the Army, and the specific unit operating within that area. Understanding the indigenous perceptions will assist leaders in war-gaming courses of action. The population's cultural makeup and their perceptions can help leaders visualize second and third order effects of their actions. For example, many Arab cultures are male-dominated societies. Traditionally, Arabs from these cultures respect strength and power. If they find themselves not in a position of strength or power, then negotiations or compromise may be used to gain the best of the situation. Therefore, bargaining demonstrates a lack of power and strength that can only be bettered through the art of negotiation. Coupled with the exaggerated threat of difficult circumstances for the one who holds the power in the hopes that he may value cooperation and wealth more than disruption and loss, bargaining is an attempt to survive on one's own terms when one lacks obvious power and strength to do so

through overt means. Leaders that choose to initially bargain with men of these cultures may have unwittingly forfeited their position as a powerful decision maker. Most western cultures will bargain from positions of strength to offer a measure of chivalry before they are compelled to force the issue to its certain conclusion. Without this understanding, the two groups of differing cultures are likely to talk past one another as each sits comfortable in his own position.

Knowledge of a culture's previous interactions with western powers can also help with this analysis. Using books such as T.E. Lawrence's *The Seven Pillars of Wisdom* to analyze the Arab is as applicable today as it was in 1926. Other books and historical records can assist in studying Asian, African, Mongolian, and South American cultures. A culture's perception of westerners is extremely important with regard to today's fight as leaders debate when and where to commit forces. It is true that through the use of population status overlays, units can visually depict the attitudes of the communities that populate the immediate area. However, understanding their true demographics that comprise a specific area of operations may require coalition forces to physically interact with them and survey their backgrounds, attitudes, and belief systems. Leaders must also consider which relationships can be reinforced with certain groups, as opposed to what relationships need to be minimized. Information operations focused through a healthy understanding of the perceptions of the civilian population goes a long way to influencing perceptions. After all, perception is often reality.

A thorough analysis of the types of groups within an area can yield the perceptions of the immediate population. Distinctions such as tribal and family differences, ethnicity, and religious beliefs drive perception and consequently, action. For example, the city of Baghdad has a population of roughly five million people — composed of three to four different tribal affiliations, three different ethnic backgrounds (Arab, Persian, and Kurdish), and four distinct religious groups (Sunni, Shia, Christian, Secular) — each with differing perceptions of the U.S. Army and the United States. Each group views the same events in a different manner and acts

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on those perceptions. Moreover, the cultural attitudes and belief systems traditionally held by these groups significantly influences how they act and interact with foreign military forces. For example, some Sunni Muslims may view Americans as infidels, whereas many Shia Muslims may view the Americans as temporary occupiers in their holy land and refer to them as “followers of the Book,” non-Muslims. These distinctions are important especially when considering force protection issues and intelligence gathering.

Finally, the impacts of the local and international media are critical when analyzing the perceptions of defined groups and their belief systems. The more access to television in urban areas may influence belief systems and actions for or against coalition forces, as opposed to rural areas, when what they view as “reality” is oftentimes according to ‘word of mouth’ information. How they get their news and the type of reported news has a dramatic effect on perception and action. One telling example is the story of “Baghdad Bob” and his false reporting to the Iraqi people in April 2003 as the 3rd Infantry Division was entering the city. The assault into Baghdad exposed information realities to the oppressed Iraqi people, as well as the unreliability of their government's message. Arguably, the assault into Baghdad demonstrated the transition of the war of maneuver with the beginning of the war of information.

Ethnic Dynamics. Ethnic dynamics include cultural mores, gender roles,

customs, superstitions and values common to all groups. Leaders that analyze ethnic dynamics can best apply combat power and shape maneuver with information operations. The need for societal security and daily routines may be reinforced with positive information operations. Advertising the death and capture of foreign terrorists or advertising that the local government with U.S. support has just recently repaired a water plant to help a town survive can garner a majority of local support for the coalition effort.

Leaders should mentally synthesize all the ethnic diversity in their areas to determine what the common denominator issues are. These issues are generally things upon which generally all civilians of varying ethnicity can reach consensus. This may foster effective military and civil-military operations that benefit the entire civilian population, as well as persuade the majority of this population that it is in their own best interests to cooperate, rather than disrupt the effort.

One common denominator issue most cultures desire is security. No matter what the cultural background, historical lessons learned from fighting insurgencies around the world have all yielded that success depends largely on the ability of friendly forces to ensure the future livelihood of the local civilian population. By protecting lives, families, essential services and infrastructure of the legitimate indigenous authorities, a quiet tolerance develops in the population suspicious of a foreign occupation. Without this security in place, all other efforts in a counterinsurgency may become secondary. The British success in the African nations of Dhofar and Sudan, and the United States' examples in the Philippines and Honduras, demonstrate the vital role security can play in a counterinsurgency. The goal then becomes one of isolating the insurgent in the eyes of the people as one that does not represent the group's future livelihood and present security. In his article “Insurgency in Iraq: An Historical Perspective,” Ian F.W. Beckett stated, “some insurgencies may simply lack the ability to progress to a wider base of support where they represent narrow sectional interests as in conflicts based upon separatism or ethnicity.” By appealing to the larger common ethnic dynamics, Army leaders can better fight insurgents that represent the ethnic minority. These

insurgents must also be shown to represent a roadblock to what is commonly held as hope for the future.

By focusing on the common denominator issues, leaders may apply combat power in ways that are both judicious and effective. In this manner, leaders demonstrate dignity and respect of the civilian population while accomplishing their mission. It is possible for leaders engaged in counterinsurgency missions to capitalize on the positive issues people of all ethnic backgrounds value, even in the insurgent's own ethnic group. The insurgents can then be shown to represent violent single-issue and self-serving changes based purely upon ethnic and racial prejudice.

Organizations of Influence. This aspect of culture forces leaders to look beyond preexisting civilian hierarchical arrangements. Many Eastern cultures for example, rely upon religious or tribal organizations as their centers of power and influence, as opposed to Western cultures whose power comes predominantly from political institutions and elected officials. By defining organizations within the community (both internal and external), leaders can understand the groups who exert power and influence over their own smaller communities and which groups can assist in the accomplishment of the mission. Defining other influential organizations or groups of influence allows for effective information collection and broadcasting, as well as a means of intelligence gathering. For example, the educated persons in an Islamic culture include clerics and teachers. Where clerics have power – teachers do not. However, teachers can be very useful in providing intelligence to U.S. forces because they rely heavily upon stability to pursue their profession and better their communities through educating the masses.

It is also important for leaders to understand which significant organizations can exert influence in their areas of operation. These organizations include both state and non-state actors. Some nation-states, for example, can significantly influence U.S. operations in certain areas because of the high trafficking of foreign Jihadists across their borders to support radical Iraqi-Sunni or Wahabbi insurgents. This is also true of other nation-states that border Iraq and exert influence on the Shia majority population. Finally, international governmental organizations like the United Nations and NATO, and non-governmental organizations like the Catholic Church and International Committee of the Red Cross/Red Crescent may be operating near U.S. forces and can lend assistance in terms of general information gathering and humanitarian relief assistance. Some NGOs, such as international terrorist cadres like Al Qaeda and Hizbollah, may support instability by cooperating with insurgents to prosecute violent attacks that cause fear and gain attention. If not properly acknowledged by coalition forces and dealt with expeditiously, their actions can clearly cause negative impacts on media, perception, security and have dire consequences for host nation and U.S. forces cooperation.

Patterns. Every culture and every community exhibit patterns of behavior. Whether it is evening and morning prayer-time, mass movement to local markets at midday, or large movements of people and vehicles that clog roadways and highways at differing times of day, populations display set patterns. Understanding these specific patterns allow leaders to plan and execute combat patrols, recon patrols and outposts, and logistical resupply. Insight to



these patterns may be gained by historical books and references, from State Department country studies, and by other people's experiences. Prior to Operation Anaconda, planners and members of the special operations community studied the book, *The Other Side of the Mountain* by Ali Ahmad Jalali and Lester W. Grau, the history of the Soviet-Afghan War, to determine patterns and trends the Mujahideen used when fighting the Soviets in the Soviet-Afghan War. Such patterns proved useful to understand when a similar Mujahideen militia in the form of the Taliban and Al Qaeda faced the United States in the spring of 2002. Knowledge gained included the Mujahideen preference to place mortars and crew-served anti-aircraft guns at mountain bases and wadis, while electing to execute the majority of the fighting physically against the Soviets from the mountain summits. The SOF planners were able to note key habits and deduce the tactics of the Mujahideen to understand how the Jihadist/Taliban forces would fight the Americans. Historic trade and migratory routes of tribesman between Afghanistan and Pakistan enabled U.S. planners to identify key mobility corridors and lateral routes used by the enemy in the high mountain passes.

At the battalion and brigade level, staffs can best target threat patterns and resources through trend and pattern analysis within the surrounding community. Leaders can focus company and platoon level operations to execute patrols, raids, and convoys based upon identified civilian patterns. Once leaders identify these patterns, it is important they do a continual estimate of them. This is important because as the civilians and enemy change their tactics and patterns, U.S. leaders can discontinue actions or adapt to the new circumstances. Information operations such as deception may also be integrated into the maneuver plan assisting leaders in identifying the deception objectives based upon the identified civilian patterns.

Leaders and Influencers. Knowing who is in charge and who makes decisions enable unit leaders to effectively exercise governance and monitor security within a prescribed area. Many times, the spiritual leader is not necessarily the decision maker for a community, but it is important for the spiritual leader to approve the decision maker's actions. Further, certain individuals, be they political, criminal, or

terrorist in nature, exhibit enormous amounts of influence over certain groups within that population. This influence can be as simple as convincing the group to obey the law, or as complex as motivating the group to exhibit religiously-based fear and hatred for foreigners. Commanders and staff officers that identify indigenous leadership that includes religious personnel, political personnel, and criminal personnel can find courses of action that bolster coalition legitimacy within the population. The linkage of key individuals, sub-organizations and networks can assist Army leaders to unlock a terrorist or insurgent network they face in their areas of operation. Leaders must decide "who" first, then "when" to engage, and with "what." This allows leaders to actively target these individuals with lethal and nonlethal means to negate their influence and leadership within the civilian population.

Economic Environment. Money and resources drive prosperity and stability. Leaders must understand how the elements of national power (DIME - diplomatic, information, military, and economic) affect the surrounding civilian community. More importantly, however, is for leaders to do an assessment of what elements of DIME are in fact lacking in their areas of operation. Usually it is some aspect of the economic prosperity that needs the most help. In 2004, the 1st Cavalry Division used the acronym of SWEAT (Sewage, Water, Electricity, Academics, Trash) to assess levels of economic stability in Iraq. The "SWEAT" assessments enabled the 1st Cavalry to measure the progress of civil-military projects, as well as define the level of prosperity within the local economic environment. Failure to assess economic factors of this type and take action may result in threat organizations filling the void. Beckett noted that "the U.S. 4th Infantry Divisions' Task Force Ironhorse reported in November 2003 that between 70 and 80 percent of those threat forces apprehended for making attacks in their area were paid to do so, the going rate being anything between \$150 and \$500."

By identifying the economic production base for their areas, leaders can effectively prosecute civil-military campaigns that bolster the economic welfare of the civilians in their areas. These campaigns include infrastructure rebuild projects, creating a

sense of security, labor opportunities, and education. Having a job allows civilians to maintain dignity and earn respect, as well as feed their families. Commerce and labor generating activities may in fact stem the flow of "neutral" civilians from moving to the side of the enemy insurgent by giving them viable labor opportunities to make their lives better. Additionally, by repairing or creating essential services such as sewers, water, electricity, education and trash removal will inevitably win popular support and increase the level of education and health status of the community. By focusing on the motivations for civilian labor and creating essential services and prosperity where there once was none, unit leaders can effectively win the support of the people who can now feed and clothe their families with less fear of the future. U.S. military leaders can measure their results by contrasting their missions with the desired effects of building job opportunities, generating commerce flow and repairing essential services. Creating economic opportunities can protect the community against poverty and future instability. Knowing the status of the economic environment also assists Army leaders in identifying the threats to local stability. These threats can be anything that contributes to the instability of that particular area. Just as asymmetrical threats like terrorists and insurgents cause instability, the inadequate conditions of broken essential services, poverty and unemployment can be contributing conditional threats to local stability. Leaders can then target both the human and the conditional threats to stabilize their particular areas.

PEOPLE – The Analysis Tool for Application of Combat Power

Ideally, leaders can use the PEOPLE matrix to conduct their civil considerations assessment. Brigade and lower unit leaders can express their assessments in bullet-comments when coupled with evaluating their higher commander's assessments. The commander must assess the effects these elements have on the threat forces in their area, as well as the effects on friendly forces within a prescribed area. While seemingly common sense, evaluating these enemy and friendly effects allows for better analysis for the application of combat power.

Applying maneuver options may include

raids, cordons and searches, ambushes, and criteria for reserve commitment. Firepower applications may include use of close air support (CAS), artillery, mortars, attack aircraft, anti-tank weapons, and the use of snipers. Techniques in the use of counter-battery fire in detecting enemy mortars may also be focused through the element of firepower. Protection application may warrant more patrols and surprise checkpoints in certain areas, the building of forward operating bases (FOBs), changing patrol routes and patterns, training host nation security forces or armed escorts for convoys. Leadership applications should include the commander's role and defining the roles other key leaders play in upcoming missions. Finally, information applications can vary from use of media sources, engaging the population with tactical psychological operations (PSYOP) teams, civil affairs employment, deception operations, town hall meetings, newspapers/hand bills, or use of radio and television programs to communicate the facts and reinforce the positive results the new government is accepting towards stability.

Ultimately, the bullets listed in the "CONCLUSIONS" block should be applied by leaders when making a tentative plan. After analyzing relative combat power, leaders can incorporate the civilian analysis conclusions to deduce proper application of combat power for the upcoming mission. When leaders determine possible decisive points and specific tactics, techniques and procedures for their upcoming operation, the civilian population will have been thoroughly considered. Assisting leaders with a common-sense method of problem solving for the civilian equation,

the PEOPLE tool can be an effective means to plan simple and effective operations.

As combat operations continue to operate within densely populated urban areas, U.S. forces will continue to come into daily contact with civilians. Now, more than ever before, small unit leaders must grasp an understanding of the people that define the areas they occupy. These leaders must discern what drives the local perceptions and motivations, and the expectations of their leaders in terms of security, prosperity, hope and stability. Failure to consider these factors may have disastrous long term consequences for U.S. forces operating there. Most importantly, this cultural understanding can assist U.S. forces with destroying the insurgent that "swims in the sea of the people." Combined tactical and cultural understanding allows for parting the waters and drying up the sea to isolate, engage and destroy those urban guerillas that threaten local and regional stability. Failure to analyze the civil considerations for a particular tactical mission may well result in an error having strategic consequences. Small unit leaders who use PEOPLE as a tool to assist them in mapping the civilian population within an area can transform their knowledge of cultural applications of combat power for any operation, in any environment.

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Figure 1 — Civil Considerations Analysis Matrix. A printable version of this matrix can be downloaded off the *Infantry Magazine* Web site (<https://www.infantry.army.mil/magazine>) under the November-December 2005 issue heading.

ASCOPE AREAS STRUCTURES CAPABILITIES ORGANIZATIONS PEOPLE EVENTS (INFO Provided by DIV & Higher)		Appendix 1: PEOPLE MATRIX				
		(Analysis and Application by Brigade and Below)				
MISSION TERRAIN ENEMY TROOPS TIME		CIVIL CONSIDERATIONS	Known Facts	EFFECTS ON ENEMY	EFFECTS ON FRIENDLY	CONCLUSIONS
		POPULATION PERCEPTIONS *Population types (ethnic & religious) *Cultural Attitudes & beliefs *Impacts of Media on belief system				
ETHNIC DYNAMICS *Common Values & Beliefs *Cultural Mores *Superstitions						
ORGANIZATIONS OF INFLUENCE *Political Orgs., Other states, IGOs, NGOs *Religious Organizations *Other (merchants, teachers, unions)						
PATTERNS *Behavioral Patterns *Historical Trends						
LEADERS *Political, Religious, Military, Criminal & Host Nation decision makers						
ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT *Sources of Income (Poverty level) *Level of Stability (SWEAT) *Education & Health Status						