

Meeting Minutes: Viewing the Civil Environment through PMESII/ASCOPE

Format: Expert Talk

Moderators: Major Ralf Baur, Commander Rene Halfmann

Expert: Captain **Judy Rojas** (Future Operations Officer, Marine Corps Civil-Military Operations School)

Audience: Open to the public. Practitioners, academics, and advanced students.

Date: 22.04.2021, 15:00 CET

Duration: 120 minutes

Guiding Questions:

- In what contexts and how do you use the PMESII/ASCOPE framework?
- What is its value added?
- What are challenges and potential pitfalls?

Block 1 - Defining ASCOPE/PMESII

Captain Rojas started her presentation with a definition of ASCOPE PMESII as it is used by US Marine Corps Civil Affairs Officers.

- The Marine Corps places ASCOPE before PMESII on purpose. ASCOPE is used as a bare minimum to structure information, while PMESII is used to refine the information collected through ASCOPE if time permits.
- ASCOPE is used to list information gathered through open-source research. At this point, no analysis takes place

The ASCOPE elements encompass:

- Areas: Where do people live, work, play?
- Structures: Why are these structures important, and what are they?
- Capabilities: Use the *SWEATMSO* (Sewer, Water, Electricity, Academic, Trash, Medical, Security, Other) acronym to list what capabilities are resident in the Operating Environment
- Organisations: What are different groups in the areas?
- People: How do people organise and interact? Who are the leaders?
- Events: When and what events are important to people? Festivities, celebrations, weather events, migratory events

ASCOPE is an information gathering opportunity.

- ASCOPE focuses efforts on the right kind of information
- When compiling this information, it should be relevant
 - to the operation,
 - to the indigenous population being supported, and
 - its impact to creating a stable environment
- ASCOPE helps a void a 'military bias' on the enemy

If time permits, information is refined using the Operational Variables expressed by the PMESII acronym:

- *Political* describes the distribution of responsibility and power at all levels of government and includes formal as well as informal structures.
- *Military* describes and includes the military capabilities of all security forces (Host Nation, insurgents, local militia, and police).
- *Economic* consists of general economic categories of the AO (energy, raw materials, labour distribution, income/food distribution, goods/services, and illicit markets)
- *Social* describes societies within an operational environment (a population whose members are subject to the same political authority, occupy a common territory, have a common culture and share a sense of identity)
- *Information* involves the collection, access, use, manipulation, distribution and reliance on data, media and knowledge systems (both civilian and military) by the local communities
- *Infrastructure* includes the basic facilities, services and installations needed for a community or society to function

Following the listing of ASCOPE and PMESII, the information is then combined and matched up in a matrix. Each box within the matrix contains a list for later analysis.

Block 2 - Civil Preparation of the Battlespace (CPB) - An Introduction

Captain Rojas continued with block two of the presentation and introduced the CPB process.

- CPB is a Marine Corps doctrinal process. Its goal is to analyse and assess civil information and its impact on all relevant actors. It is not part of Army Civil Affairs doctrine
 - > Gain a comprehensive understanding of the Civil Operating Environment in order to develop a Civil Environment Model that informs decision makers of possible civil actions that may impact the mission
- 4-step analytical process looking at the Civil Operating Environment. It enhances understanding to inform decisions in order to improve civil-military interaction

4 steps of intel preparation process and the CPB:

1. **Define Operating Environment:** CPB is focused on the *Civil Operating Environment*, not just the Operating Environment.
 - a. Collect information -> list using ASCOPE, PMESII to refine it
2. **Describe effects on operations:** analyse Civil Operating Environment
 - a. Evaluate/analyse everything collected using ASCOPE/PMESII
 - b. Analyse civil factors (aspects significantly affecting friendly forces) and relevance (how and why do they affect friendly forces)
 - c. Determine key influences -> not just people, also places and things
 - d. Create products (Civil MCOO etc)

Cultural factors analysis

- taking abstract concept of culture and determine impact
- culture = shared world view and social structures of a group of people that influences a person's/group's actions and choices
- can be key influences
- Critical self-reflection and perspective taking are necessary to conduct cultural factors analysis: Are we looking at the culture like we are looking at our own?

Stakeholder Analysis Techniques

- no correct ('hard') way to conduct
- stakeholders may change
- own actions may impact stakeholders

Stability dynamics

- instability: specifically looking at instability and stability dynamics in civil operating environment e.g. decrease support for government, increased support for malign actors, disrupt functioning of society
- stability: increase gov support, decrease support for malign actors, etc.

Instability Factors Matrix

- Uses Grievances and Resiliencies matrices to analyse Events, Key Influences, and Means and Motivations linked to them
- Information used for the instability factors matrix comes directly from PMESII
- Guiding questions: What increases grievances or undermines resiliencies?

Grievances	Events	Key Influences - Means & Motivations
Resiliencies	Events	Key Influences - Means & Motivations

Source of instability & source of stability analysis matrices

- list of potential sources of (in)stability
- Are (in)stability criteria met? -> is this a source of (in)stability?
- prioritisation: is this a priority group for the local populace? -> based on whether source of (in)stability is also source of grievances/resiliencies

3. **Develop a Civil Environment model** (specific product, introduced later)

- similar to the Modified Combined Obstacle Overlay (MCOO)
- depicts system of key influences
- refined civil considerations' matrix (alternative visualisation)

4. **Determine civil actions:**

- develop an initial assessment of possible civil actions -> refined by the green cell
- output of the process informs intelligence side of the house, IPB process
- also used in COA wargaming process in planning process
- civil actions aim to paint a more clear picture of the OE

Block 3 - Stability Assessment Framework (SAF) - An Introduction

In block three, Captain Rojas introduced the Stability Assessment Framework, broken down into four components. She mentioned that, while there would be a lot more to it than what she would show, the purpose of this session as to present how the Marine Corps utilises ASCOPE/PMESII during SAF.

SAF = approach to help understand stability dynamics, not stand-alone-process

- tool that supports CPB (separate process) and supports efforts targeting process
- support Marines in supporting their commander's decision-making through better understanding

SAF is broken down into 4 components:

1. CPB Civil considerations, cultural dynamics, instability factors)
purpose: achieve heightened understanding of battlespace by:
 - Understanding of the overall Operating Environment (Civil Considerations) using ASCOPE/PMESII
 - Understanding of the Cultural Dynamics (5 Dimensions)
 - Understanding of Instability/ Stability Dynamics (Resiliencies vs. Grievances)

-> cultural factor analysis: specifically look at 5 cultural dimensions

 - ecological structure, social structure, symbolic structure
 - apply cultural perspective-taking and cultural interpretation of info
 - minimize mirroring -> questions in appendix B

(in)stability factors matrix
2. Analysis (focused on stability assessment)
 - purpose: narrow relevant factors to a lesser number of issues that are sources of (in)stability
3. Design (activity design, COA Development, Stability Worksheet pt. 2, Civil recon)
 - purpose: design, prioritise and synchronise stabilisation activities
4. Execution
 - nominating non-lethal targeting package to the operations department



-> USMC uses ASCOPE/PMESII to organise information in order to facilitate further analytical processes of the CE such as CPB and SAF