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MASTER OF DEFENCE STUDIES

**LISTENING TO THE PEOPLE:
THE UTILITY OF OPINION POLLING IN OPERATIONS AMONG POPULATIONS**

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

*The people know who is winning.*¹
Sir Robert Thompson

The astute comment above was made by Sir Robert Thompson, who entered the Malayan Civil Service in 1938 and, after service in the R.A.F. during World War II, returned to Malaya and served in the Civil Service until 1961, eventually becoming Secretary for Defence in Kuala Lumpur. Thompson played an important part in what was one of the most successful counterinsurgency campaigns in modern times. In fact, the conflict in Malaya came to be seen as a model for the conduct of counterinsurgency operations.² The communist insurgency in Malaya grew out of the Chinese anti-Japanese guerrilla movement of World War II. Although the insurgency lasted from 1948 to 1960, its momentum had been lost by 1954 and the final years consisted largely of mopping up small pockets of insurgents in isolated regions of the country.³ At first glance, the Malayan conflict appears to bear no similarities to the conflicts in which Western nations find themselves involved in the Twenty-first Century. Most obviously, the Malayan conflict was a communist insurgency, and very few of these are going on in the world today, neither do there seem likely to be in the near future. In fact, in describing the challenges facing coalition forces in Afghanistan, some writers have suggested that the

¹United States, Department of the Army, FM 3-24 *Counterinsurgency* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2006), 5-20.

²John Newsinger, *British Counterinsurgency: From Palestine to Northern Ireland*. (Hampshire, Great Britain: Palgrave, 2002), 31.

³Newsinger, *British Counterinsurgency ...*, 38-58.

British experiences from the 1950s and 1960s are no longer relevant: “Much of (the British Army’s counterinsurgency) experience was gained off the back of attempts to defeat Maoist-type insurgencies – very different challenges to the more complex situation in Iraq and Afghanistan.”⁴ The lessons learned from Malaya should not be so quickly dismissed, however, as there are many similarities between the earlier communist insurgency movements of Southeast Asia and those of the ethnic and religious-based insurgencies being conducted today.

First of all, the tactics employed by the communist insurgency movements in Southeast Asia and those of the Middle East today are very similar. Terrorism in the form of selected public bombings, kidnappings and intimidation of elected or government-appointed officials are employed. Guerrilla warfare techniques, such as ambushes and other hit-and-run tactics where decisive engagement is avoided, are used in order to protract the struggle and wear down the strength and morale of government forces and their allies. Information operations such as propaganda and other means of influencing government forces and the population are essential to victory.⁵ The conflicts also are similar in that the insurgent recruits generally fall under the same three categories: what Thompson referred to as naturals, the converted and the deceived.⁶ With respect to the naturals, Thompson explains that this category can consist of many elements from the idealist to the criminal, but they are unified in a desire to change the

⁴Claudia Harvey and Mark Wilkinson, “The Value of Doctrine: Assessing British Officers’ Perspectives,” *The RUSI Journal* 154, no. 6 (December 2009): 26.

⁵Robert Thompson, *Defeating Communist Insurgency: Experiences from Malaya and Vietnam* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1974), 35-49.

⁶Thompson, *Defeating Communist Insurgency...*, 35-37.

existing order. Here, the similarities between the communist insurgencies and the religious and ethnic ideals of modern insurgencies with respect to the marriage of convenience between criminal elements and idealists are recognizable. The converted are those who join due to family or other close linkages with the insurgents and those who have been wronged by the abuses of government or have had family killed as a result of military operations. Again, the similarities are strikingly obvious. The deceived category is made up of those who are not exactly sure what they are being recruited for, at least not initially. As Thompson writes: “There are not many boys who, when offered a rifle and told to fire at all passing aircraft, could possibly resist the temptation.”⁷ Although Thompson does not include the desperate, for modern insurgencies one could include this group either within this last category or as a category on its own. These are those who are employed as low-level soldiers or improvised explosive device planters in exchange for money. Finally, and most importantly, with respect to the similarities between earlier communist insurgencies and those that Western armies find themselves dealing with today, the strategic aim of the insurgency is to gain control of the population in order to destroy the government’s prestige and authority and gain legitimacy for themselves.⁸ Therefore, no matter what the ideals being fought for, the conflict between an insurgency and a counterinsurgency becomes a struggle for the support of the people.

In the case of Malaya, the success of the counterinsurgency campaign has often been attributed to what became known as the ‘Briggs Plan’. General Sir Harold Briggs was appointed Director of operations in Malaya in 1950 and instituted a massive

⁷Thompson, *Defeating Communist Insurgency...*, 36.

⁸*Ibid.*, 29.

resettlement of the Chinese squatter population, where support for the insurgency was strongest.⁹ John Newsinger, in a survey of British counterinsurgency campaigns from Palestine in the 1940s to Northern Ireland, writes that although the resettlement was an effective measure in curtailing support for the insurgency, just as important, if not more so, to the outcome of the campaign in Malaya was the consent rather than the control of the population. Newsinger asserts that the support of the Malay population, which the insurgents were never able to gain in any significance, was vital for the British success.¹⁰ The main impact of the government measures that achieved this success occurred from 1952 to 1954, when Sir Gerald Templar was British High Commissioner. Templar's military success in Malaya was bolstered by social and political reforms: "He was an exponent of the 'hearts and minds' approach, an attempt to secure the allegiance of the (population). This was to be achieved not by police methods but by a combination of welfare measures and political advance."¹¹ Templar's emphasis on the people's 'hearts and minds' is often referenced in association with contemporary interventions, but it is almost as often misunderstood by those using the term. Templar did not mean that 'being nice' to the population and making them like you was in itself the key to success. More specifically, he meant that success in counterinsurgency rests on popular perception, and that this has both emotive (hearts) and cognitive (minds) components. The people's support can be gained only if they are convinced that your success is in their long-term interest and that your side is actually going to win, as it is not in their best interest to back

⁹Newsinger, *British Counterinsurgency...*, 49.

¹⁰*Ibid.*, 58.

¹¹*Ibid.*, 56.

the eventual loser.¹² Of course, it should not be forgotten that part of demonstrating to the population that one's side is going to win requires success in combat operations against the insurgents.

When one sets aside the ideals espoused by the insurgents, it becomes apparent that the armed intervention in Malaya was not dissimilar from contemporary counterinsurgency campaigns. If, as suggested by the discussion above, a major lesson from Malaya is that success in counterinsurgency rests on the perception of the population within the area of operations, then that population must be influenced. In order for the people to be influenced, they must be understood. What are the best methods of gaining an understanding of the people in an area of operations? Further, how does a commander know if the methods being employed to influence the people are working? One possible, and perhaps the most obvious, answer to both of these questions is to engage the people. An important method of understanding the attitudes and perceptions of a population is to conduct opinion polling. This paper will argue that opinion polling as a method of surveying the population should be included in Canadian military doctrine. The future operating environment will be looked at in order to show that most future armed conflict will be conducted among failed and failing states among populations, and that the support of these populations will be essential for the success of these interventions. The challenges to a field commander of understanding the characteristics, especially tribalism, of the human terrain in these failed and failing states will be discussed. Current doctrine will be consulted in order to guide the discussion, but

¹² Notes taken from a lecture given at the ISAF Counterinsurgency Training Centre, Kabul, Afghanistan, February 2009. Author unknown.

also with a view to identifying gaps in doctrine, specifically as pertains to surveying the population within the future operating environment. By looking at current methods of understanding the human terrain, and specifically population survey methods, it will be shown that opinion polling can assist in a commander's understanding of people's perceptions and in tracking changes in these perceptions. Opinion polling in conflict zones, especially in failed and failing states, is not without challenges and limitations, in terms of the conditions required and methods of conduct. These issues also will be discussed. It should be noted that the application of theory to a live field environment and its relevance to commanders in the field is being analyzed. Therefore, the discussion constitutes an assessment of the tools supported by theory and does not involve analysis of the technical aspects of opinion polling research except in general terms.

CHAPTER 2

THE FUTURE OPERATING ENVIRONMENT

Trying to predict what future armed conflicts will be like based on the struggles that we are engaged in now is perilous. If, as Clausewitz tells us, war is conducted in a climate of uncertainty, we cannot expect to use the characteristics of one war as a template for how to fight another one.¹³ This is especially true when one considers that there is likely to be little stomach in Canada for another protracted counterinsurgency struggle such as Afghanistan. The latest quarterly Angus Reid poll on the level of support for the war in Afghanistan found that support among Canadians fell by six points to thirty-seven per cent while opposition was up four points to fifty-six per cent. In addition, only thirty-four per cent think that Canada did the right thing in its decision to take part in the Afghan war.¹⁴ It is unhelpful, however, to separate conflict into irregular (which counterinsurgency is usually classified under) and regular wars. Frank G. Hoffman of the Center for Emerging Threats and Opportunities at the US Marine Corps Combat Development Command explains: “The most distinctive change in the character of modern war is the blurred or blended nature of combat.”¹⁵ One of the leading authors on modern strategy, Colin S. Gray, supports Hoffman’s argument. Gray tells us that “... (m)any, perhaps most, wars are characterized by belligerents resorting to a range of

¹³Colin S.Gray, “Irregular Warfare: One Nature Many Characters,” *Strategic Studies Quarterly* 1, no. 2 (Winter 2007): 40.

¹⁴Information obtained from <http://www.angusreidstrategies.com>; accessed 15 January 2010.

¹⁵Frank G. Hoffman, “Hybrid Warfare and Challenges,” *Joint Forces Quarterly* 52, (1st Quarter 2009): 37.

combat roles on the regular-irregular spectrum.”¹⁶ Others have suggested that what makes armed conflict ‘hybrid’ is not the mix of regular and irregular methods but the mix of material and cognitive capabilities brought to bear.¹⁷ These distinctions are subtle, however, and for the purposes of this discussion the important inference to be made regarding the preceding observations is that in attempting to predict the nature of armed conflict in which modern Western forces may find ourselves, the best we can say is that there is likely to be both conventional and non-conventional aspects to it. Is this the best we can do? Not quite. There is another characteristic of future conflict that is likely: that is that future operations will be fought amongst populations and the support of these populations will be paramount in order to achieve success.

One of the reasons why future conflicts will be fought amongst the people is increased urbanization. The UN projects world population will increase by 1.8 billion people to 8.3 billion by 2030. It is estimated that approximately fifty percent of the global population lives in urban areas and that this percentage will grow to roughly sixty percent by 2030 since approximately 1.3 million people per week are moving into cities worldwide.¹⁸ In addition, most of that growth is expected to occur in the developing world in fragile or failed states where the government is often ineffective, hostile, or non-existent and a host of other threats such as pandemic disease, terrorism, insurrection, frequent criminal acts, famine, and potable water scarcity exist. The Department of

¹⁶Gray, “Irregular Warfare ...,” 41.

¹⁷David Sadowski and Jeff Becker, “Beyond the ‘Hybrid’ Threat: Asserting the Essential Unity of Warfare,” <http://smallwarsjournal.com/blog/journal/2010/01>; Internet; accessed 15 January 2010.

¹⁸Department of National Defence, *Strategic Assessment 2006-2007* (Ottawa: Directorate of Strategic Analysis Policy Planning Division, 2006), 93.

National Defence (DND) Strategic Assessment for 2006-2007 explains that developing countries are significantly affected by insurgencies that resort to asymmetric warfare because these movements usually cannot match the power of the state:

Large cities in fragile or failed states, lacking adequate police and military forces to provide basic security, comprise what some analysts refer to as ungoverned space. Terrorist or insurgent groups use this ungoverned space as a theatre of operations that provides them with concealment and some shelter against attack; ... as a venue to inflict casualties upon the civilian population or security forces in an attempt to destroy all remaining state apparatus; and, also as a stage upon which these groups execute their strategic public relations campaign through the global media.¹⁹

The Strategic Assessment goes on to say that the relative lack of capacity to handle asymmetric conflicts is likely to encourage enemies of the West to use failed and failing states as staging bases. The report suggests the support of Iran and Syria for Hezbollah in Southern Lebanon as a case in point.²⁰ Gray tells us that in these ‘wars amongst the people’ “... decisive combat occurs in and about the minds of civilians, not on the battlefield. Protection of the people must be job one.”²¹ Military forces, therefore, will need to overcome the dangerous and chaotic conditions of the urban space which limit manoeuvre in order to neutralize insurgents or terrorists while protecting the people.²²

Political scientist Mary Kaldor has suggested that globalization is another reason why most current and future conflict will be fought amongst the people. Globalization has resulted in increased interconnectedness amongst people which has led to a breakdown of traditional cultural and socio-economic divisions. This disruption has

¹⁹DND, *Strategic Assessment...*, 95.

²⁰*Ibid.*, 76.

²¹Grey, “Irregular Warfare...,” 43.

²²DND, *Strategic Assessment...*, 96.

resulted in an increase in failed and failing states. New identities arise based on ethnicity, religion or tribe.²³ Operations amongst the people are more likely for Canada not just because of their prevalence in the world today, but also because we have chosen consciously to involve ourselves in humanitarian missions by supporting the United Nations doctrine of the ‘Responsibility to Protect’. Therefore, prohibition against interfering in the internal affairs of sovereign states no longer keeps us from intervening in cases of perceived human rights violations.²⁴ Retired US Army Major-General Robert Scales refers to these new types of wars as “psycho-cultural” wars and contends that they are causing a shift in classical centers of gravity “... from the will of governments and armies to the perceptions of populations.”²⁵ This point is essential to understand. Because operations will be conducted increasingly amongst populations, the centre of gravity for these operations is the will of the people, not just for counterinsurgency operations.²⁶ Echoing Scales’ assertion regarding the will of the people as the centre of gravity for future wars, General Sir Rupert Smith, advises that the will of the people cannot be won by winning a trial of strength. Rather, political and military developments must complement each other.²⁷

²³Department of National Defence, *Broadsword or Rapier? The Canadian Forces Involvement in 21st Century Coalition Operations* (Ottawa: Canadian Forces Leadership Institute, Canadian Defence Academy, 2008), 16.

²⁴DND, *Broadsword or Rapier...*, 19.

²⁵Robert H. Scales, “Clausewitz and World War IV,” *Armed Forces Journal* (July 1 2006): 17.

²⁶The Canadian Forces Joint Publication 5.0 *The Canadian Forces Operational Planning Process*, defines Centre of Gravity as “characteristics, capabilities or localities from which a nation, an alliance, a military force or other grouping derives its freedom of action, physical strength or will to fight.” (p. 2-1).

²⁷General Sir Rupert Smith, *The Utility of Force: The Art of War in the Modern World* (London: Allan Lane 2005), xiii.

But assistance must go beyond political and military developments. Kaldor explains that human security involves more than just state security. It comprises "... economic security, food security, health security, environmental security, personal security, community security and political security."²⁸ Therefore, if we want to secure the population, we must be prepared to provide all of these to the greatest extent possible; hence the requirement for a comprehensive approach and the need for civilian government departments and military forces to be capable of working hand in hand. Political settlements will need to be implemented, the capacity of police and other civil agencies are likely to require building at all levels of government, and long-term development and economic reconstruction will be necessary. While all of this is taking place, it will be up to the military to assist in the protection of the people both by providing a secure environment and by assisting in the collection of the intelligence essential for all aspects of human security described above to be enhanced.²⁹

The 'population-centric' approach to wars among the people, particularly counterinsurgency operations, has been challenged recently by Mark Moyar, Professor of National Security Affairs at the U.S. Marine Corps University. In his book *A Question of Command*, Moyar analyzes nine counterinsurgency campaigns from the U.S. Civil War to present operations in Afghanistan and Iraq, and including the Malaya campaign, and concludes "... that counterinsurgency is 'leader-centric' warfare, a contest between elites in which the elite with superiority in certain leadership attributes usually wins."³⁰

²⁸Mary Kaldor, *Human Security* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2007), 182.

²⁹DND, *Broadsword or Rapier* ..., 23.

Downplaying the importance of the people's social, political and economic grievances as causes of popular insurgencies, Moyar believes that the population is moved to insurgency more by the influence of insurgent leaders and therefore choosing effective counterinsurgent leaders is the best method of defeating an insurgency.³¹ For example, in examining Templar's role in turning around the Malaya campaign, Moyar argues that Templar did not introduce new tactics or strategy, but simply executed existing techniques better through better leadership. Templar's personal leadership and his emphasis on selecting good leaders and replacing bad ones at all levels allowed him to succeed where others had failed, turning the campaign around.³²

A close look at Moyar's theory, however, reveals that the two approaches are not incompatible. For example, in describing broad principles that apply to counterinsurgency, Moyar includes the requirement for counterinsurgents to "... strive to gain the assistance of the population" and to "... maintain a permanent presence in populous areas."³³ In any event, even if one accepts that a leader-centric versus population-centric approach is more effective, a counterinsurgent commander still must gain the support of the population, and this requires establishing methods of understanding the population.

³⁰Mark Moyar, *A Question of Command: Counterinsurgency from the Civil War to Iraq* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), 3.

³¹Moyar, *A Question of Command...*, 3-5.

³²*Ibid.*, 122-127.

³³*Ibid.*, 5.

CHAPTER 3

TRIBALISM AND UNDERSTANDING THE HUMAN TERRAIN

If future wars will be fought amongst the people, whose support is essential for success, it is, therefore, essential for military commanders to have as thorough as possible an understanding of the complexities of the population, or what is often referred to as the human terrain, in the environment within which they are operating. This can be problematic for Western militaries, which tend to rely on technology for finding and defeating a known enemy, with identifiable uniforms and equipment. When the enemy cannot be discerned from the rest of the population, the usefulness of the sensors afforded by modern technology can be very limited. The commander must rely more on social and political information and this requires a much different approach to gathering information than most Western militaries are used to when conducting conventional operations. As described in the DND Strategic Assessment, mentioned above: “The population becomes a social sensor that detects and identifies terrorists, insurgents, and collaborators. The key is to get their ongoing support.”³⁴ The notion of the importance of garnering the support of the population is especially important when conducting counterinsurgency operations. Scott Moore, in proposing a new concept for conducting counterinsurgency explains why: “Counterinsurgency is not so much a war to be won as a conflict to be resolved. ... (T)he objective must be solving the causes of the conflict.”³⁵ Moore goes on to explain that resolution means convincing those who might turn to

³⁴DND, *Strategic Assessment...*, 41.

³⁵R. Scott Moore, “Winning in the Streets: A Concept for Counterinsurgency in the 21st Century,” *Small Wars Journal* (2006): 3.

insurgency that their needs are better met peacefully. Therefore, cooption, inclusion, negotiation and reconciliation must go hand in hand with efforts to solve the root causes of the conflict.³⁶ Moore also provides some insight as to how modern insurgencies are able to operate within cities, by "... hiding within discreet ethnic and religious communities and groups, (and by combining) tribalism, violence, subversion, and intimidation with the protection offered by the warrens of urban terrain ..."³⁷ Moore introduces an important factor into the discussion of the human terrain that warrants more detailed examination: that of tribalism.

As described above, it is very likely that future conflicts, at least within the next few decades, will take place in the developing world in fragile and failing states where the government (at all levels) is unwilling or unable to provide leadership and social structure to large portions of the population. In many of these societies, tribalism fulfills this role. Understanding tribal societies can be very demanding as they are usually extremely complex. In discussing the complex tribal map in Afghanistan, Bernt Glatzer stresses the importance that the tribes have always played in the political history of the country, because "... the tribal system has always served as a blueprint for political alliances."³⁸ The difficulty of understanding a tribal map is exacerbated by the fluid nature of tribal leadership and alliances in many areas. Segmentary solidarity allows for the rise of powerful political leaders, but segmentary division can bring them down as

³⁶Moore, "Winning in the Streets..." 3.

³⁷*Ibid.*, 4.

³⁸Bernt Glatzer, "Is Afghanistan on the Brink of Ethnic and Tribal Disintegration?" in *Fundamentalism Reborn? Afghanistan and the Taliban*, edited by William Maley, 167-181 (New York, NY: New York University Press, 2001), 174.

well (usually with the death of a charismatic leader). There are many ways to gain power in a tribal setting, including skill at channelling resources into the tribe, attracting support through lavish hospitality, demonstrating superior rhetorical gifts and/or sound judgment, or gallantry in war and conflict. These qualities are transitory, however, and are under constant threat from competition.³⁹ It follows that tribal alliances will change frequently, based on the changing personalities of the leaders, who will come and go, but also on the need for these leaders to shift alliances as required in order to remain in control. In spite of this unpredictability, however, the tribal system provides stability and resilience, especially in times of turmoil and when there is no state authority. As powerful and controlling as the Taliban were when they were in power in Afghanistan, Glatzer points out that where the tribal system was functioning smoothly, the Taliban did not dare to touch it, preferring to allow the peripheral areas to be ruled by the local authorities and institutions.⁴⁰ Understanding the tribal map is very important, therefore, for a military commander because of the importance that tribes play in military and political alliances. Unfortunately, it is also very difficult to gain and maintain an understanding of tribal politics and allegiances due to the fluidity of tribal leadership and relationships among the leaders.

Tribalism is important not only because it functions in the absence of other more formal forms of government, but also because, much like ethnicity, to which it is closely linked, it has the ability to arouse deep emotions and strong loyalty from its members. These deep-seated feelings can lead to particular aggressiveness when conflicts arise and

³⁹Glatzer, "Is Afghanistan on the Brink...", 175.

⁴⁰*Ibid.*, 177.

can be exploited by insurgencies, terrorist organizations, or criminal elements. As Glatzer puts it: “Organizers and leaders of conflicts use ethnic and tribal emotions and the feelings of honour and shame connected with them as a tool or weapon as efficiently as a Stinger or Kalishnikov.”⁴¹ Using tribes is made easier by the fact that tribal societies have social, economic and military networks that are easily adapted to warfighting. Therefore, according to the counterinsurgency manual used by both the U.S. Army and Marine Corps, “... (t)he ways in which insurgents exploit a tribal network does not represent an evolved form of insurgency but the expression of inherent cultural and social customs.”⁴² The importance of understanding the tribal map was emphasised recently in a report issued by the head of intelligence of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan: “If relations suddenly were to sour between U.S. troops and an influential tribe on the outskirts of Kandahar, public confidence in the government’s ability to hold the entire city might easily, and predictably, falter.”⁴³

Mark Moyar’s analysis of nine counterinsurgency campaigns also emphasizes the importance of ethnic and tribal loyalties in the conduct of counterinsurgency campaigns. Because the population generally prefer leaders who share their group identities, winning the support of these leaders is usually seen as essential for success.⁴⁴ In addition, it is sometimes necessary to choose between groups of elites, and this has the potential to

⁴¹Glatzer, “Is Afghanistan on the Brink...,” 180.

⁴²US Army, *Counterinsurgency*, B-15.

⁴³Major-General Michael T. Flynn, Captain Mark Pottinger and Paul D. Batchelor, *Fixing Intel: A Blueprint for Making Intelligence Relevant in Afghanistan*, (Washington, DC: Centre for a New American Security, January 2010), 11.

⁴⁴Moyar, *A Question of Command...*, 282.

decide the outcome of the entire campaign, therefore comprehension of these elites and the power structures that got them there is critical.⁴⁵ Because it will be necessary for military leaders to engage with these elites, they should have as detailed an understanding as possible of the perceptions and attitudes of the populations that support these elites. It would seem to follow that opinion polling or some form of population survey could help commanders to gain this knowledge.

In spite of what appears to be widespread agreement regarding the importance of the influence of tribalism in particular, and understanding the human terrain in general, with respect to counterinsurgency operations, many feel that these lessons are not being applied to contemporary operations. Writing in *Vanguard* magazine recently, Thomas Johnson has suggested that not enough is being done to understand and exploit the tribal component in Afghanistan:

The old Arab proverb, an enemy of an enemy is a friend, is most certainly in play in Afghanistan. We have to understand and exploit the fissures between different insurgency groups. ... There is a certain tribal component that we don't understand very clearly and we continue to downplay the insurgencies' tribal roots. ... (The Taliban) understand the messages that resonate with the people and they understand the requisite cultural dynamics. The information that we have put out just has not resonated with the people.⁴⁶

The preceding discussion begs certain questions in the context of an examination of the utility of opinion polling in Canadian Forces operations. It is apparent that commanders must understand tribal dynamics, but do opinion polls ask the right questions in order to assist with this? Are tribal affiliations being cross-referenced with opinions on coalition

⁴⁵Moyar, *A Question of Command...*, 283-286.

⁴⁶Thomas H. Johnson, "Tribal Politics: Why we must understand the human terrain," *Vanguard* (May/June 2008): 13.

or Afghan government actions and decisions? Are engagements with tribal leaders, which provide information on tribal versus individual opinions and decisions, a more important means of understanding the human terrain? Does existing doctrine provide sufficient guidance for commanders regarding this subject? The following chapter will examine what is contained in current Canadian military doctrine, as well as that of our closest ally, the U.S., regarding understanding the human terrain.

CHAPTER 4

WHAT GUIDANCE DOES DOCTRINE OFFER?

According to the CF publication *Canadian Military Doctrine*, "... doctrine provides the framework within which military operations are planned and executed."⁴⁷ It is a body of knowledge gained from experience, containing fundamental principles which provide guidance on how to organize and employ military forces.⁴⁸ Claudia Harvey and Mark Wilkinson, Officer Tutors in the Educational and Training Services Branch of the British Army, recently have proposed that "... if military forces do have doctrine appropriate to the type of conflict they are immersed in, and, perhaps more importantly, its personnel are familiar with that doctrine, it might well be a significant factor in a successful outcome of the conflict."⁴⁹ The CF Doctrine publication warns, however, that doctrine, while authoritative, "... requires judgement in application."⁵⁰ Therefore, while doctrine is intended to provide a common approach it should not bind military forces by prescriptive rules which constrain initiative and imagination.⁵¹ For example, according to Mark Moyar, Sir Gerald Templar promoted doctrine but was pragmatic and suspicious of "... theories that purported to apply everywhere. ...Templar granted (his leaders) freedom to adopt general counterinsurgency principles to the specific environments they

⁴⁷Department of National Defence, B-GJ-005-000-CFJP-01 *Canadian Military Doctrine* (Ottawa: DND Canada, 2009), 1-1.

⁴⁸DND, *Canadian Military Doctrine*, 1-1.

⁴⁹Harvey and Wilkinson, "The Value of Doctrine...", 28.

⁵⁰DND, *Canadian Military Doctrine*, 1-1.

⁵¹*Ibid.*, 1-2.

faced ...”⁵² Harvey and Wilkinson expand on this notion by suggesting that doctrine can be used as a template for the “less able”, while the “more imaginative” can use it as a framework for thought.⁵³ Of course, the most obvious difficulty with this recommendation is defining which military members are ‘less able’ and which are ‘more imaginative’. Presumably it is left to the individuals to decide for themselves which category they fall under. Perhaps more helpfully, Harvey and Wilkinson provide some general advice concerning the use of doctrine: “Fundamentally, it should encourage thought, leading to the creation of appropriate solutions to the problems in hand.”⁵⁴ Doctrine should not be misunderstood as simply abstract theory, however, but must guide military forces by providing procedures and techniques that have been proven to work under certain circumstances and are likely to work under similar circumstances. Having said all of this, it follows that in any discussion about whether or not a concept or procedure such as use of population surveys should be employed by the CF, current doctrine should be consulted for guidance. In order to ascertain what guidance is provided by doctrine with respect to understanding the human terrain, the following publications were consulted: the CF and U.S. Army/Marine Corps counterinsurgency manuals as well as the CF Peace Support Operations manual.

Some may argue that understanding the human terrain is not relevant to peace support operations (PSO) because ‘the will of the people’ is not likely to be considered as

⁵²Moyar, *A Question of Command...*, 127.

⁵³Harvey and Wilkinson, “The Value of Doctrine...,” 30.

⁵⁴*Ibid.*

a strategic centre of gravity in these types of operations. It should be kept in mind, however, given the picture painted above of the future operating environment, that PSO, like other operations, are likely to be conducted amongst the populations of the countries or regions of operations. For example, humanitarian assistance tasks, including public security assistance, are part of PSO.⁵⁵ If, for example, a military force is faced with a potential crowd confrontation situation, knowledge of local culture and prevailing public mood could help to prevent or diffuse the situation. In addition, part of the military's task in PSO is "...(o)bserving, monitoring, verifying and reporting any alleged violation of the governing agreements."⁵⁶ It stands to reason that getting feedback from the population could play an important role in this task. That said, the PSO manual makes no mention of the potential of opinion polling or other forms of population survey to assist in these tasks. Notwithstanding the significance of appreciating the role of the population in PSO, counterinsurgency operations are perhaps more obvious with respect to the importance of an in-depth understanding of the human terrain.

It may be questioned why it was deemed necessary to consult a U.S. manual in an examination of doctrine relevant to the CF. The U.S. is Canada's closest military ally and, as it possesses by far the largest military in the alliance, has a strong influence on NATO military doctrine. As there is no NATO counterinsurgency manual, and

⁵⁵Department of National Defence, B-GJ-005-307/FP-030 *Peace Support Operations* (Ottawa: DND Canada, 2003), 4-11 – 4-14.

⁵⁶DND, *Peace Support Operations*, 4-1.

considering that the U.S. has a great deal of recent experience with counterinsurgency in Iraq and Afghanistan, it is worthwhile to examine their doctrine.

The U.S. counterinsurgency manual stresses the importance of understanding the population through cultural understanding and being able to immerse in the people and their lives: “Forces that learn COIN effectively have generally ... proved open to soliciting and evaluating advice from the local people in the conflict zone.”⁵⁷ The manual goes further in describing the main objective in counterinsurgency as being legitimacy in the eyes of the people. Therefore, “(c)ommanders and staff must continually diagnose what they understand legitimacy to mean to the host nation population.”⁵⁸ Military forces are expected to understand the population’s interests with particular attention to be paid to physical security, basic necessities, economic well-being, political participation and social identity.⁵⁹ As to how this is to be accomplished in practical terms, the document provides little guidance. In a chapter titled ‘Counterinsurgency Approaches, there is a brief mention regarding population surveys: “Major activities during (the ‘HOLD’ stage) include (among five other activities mentioned) ... Conducting area surveys to determine available resources and the populace’s needs. Local leaders should be involved.”⁶⁰ It is unclear whether this means that local leaders should be solicited to assist in the conduct of population surveys or that the surveys should concentrate on local leaders as respondents. This idea is mentioned again in

⁵⁷US Army, *Counterinsurgency*, x.

⁵⁸*Ibid.*, 1-21.

⁵⁹*Ibid.*, 3-11.

⁶⁰*Ibid.*, 5-20.

Annex A of the manual. The annex is intended to provide a guide with proven successful techniques for counterinsurgency. In the nine pages of the annex, however, only one line mentions the conduct of surveys: “A series of village or neighbourhood surveys, regularly updated, are invaluable to understanding what the populace needs and tracking progress in meeting them (sic).”⁶¹ No mention is made as to how these surveys should be conducted or who should be responsible for designing and conducting them.

The importance of measuring the progress of a counterinsurgency campaign is discussed in the U.S. manual. It is expected that a commander will adjust intent and activities based on the progress of the operation. The manual acknowledges, however, that the complex nature of counterinsurgency makes progress difficult to measure. It suggests that subjective assessment is needed at all levels in order to measure local and broader success or failure against the overall operation’s end state.⁶² Examples are given of possible progress indicators, but there is no suggestion as to what specific method should be used to gather the information that would allow these indicators to be measured. It makes sense that some form of population survey could be used to measure several of these indicators. Table 4.1 shows the list of indicators provided in the U.S. counterinsurgency manual and suggests possible sources that could be used in order to measure these indicators:

⁶¹US Army, *Counterinsurgency*, A-7.

⁶²*Ibid.*, 5-26.

Table 4.1 – Suggested Information Sources for US COIN Campaign Progress Indicators

Campaign Progress Indicator⁶³	Possible Information Source
Acts of Violence	Police Reports/ Population Survey
Human Movement and Religious Attendance	NGOs/Survey of Religious Leaders/ Population Survey
Presence/Activity of Small/Medium Businesses	Military Patrols
Dislocated Civilians	NGOs/Host Nation Government
Levels of Agricultural Activity	NGOs/Host Nation Government
Presence of Associations (unions, political parties, professional associations)	Government/ Population Survey
Government Services Available	Government/Military Patrols/ Population Survey
Freedom of Movement (people/goods/communications)	Media/NGOs/ Population Survey
Tax Revenue	Government
Industry Exports	Government
Employment Rate	Government
Availability of Electricity	Government/ Population Survey
Specific Attacks on Infrastructure	Military/Police Reports/Government

The table indicates that there is a place for some form of population survey in the collection of information needed to measure the progress of a counterinsurgency campaign.

A more immediate requirement than measuring campaign progress is measuring the effects of specific targeting. Targeting in counterinsurgency, as in any other type of operation, requires the ability to assess the effects of activities such as tactical operations intended to influence attitudes of insurgents and/or the population. The U.S. manual includes changes in local attitudes and public perceptions towards counterinsurgency forces and the host nation governments among a long list of metrics which could be used

⁶³US Army, *Counterinsurgency*, 5-28.

to assess targeting effects.⁶⁴ Again, the manual does not provide suggestions as to how this information is to be collected.

Annex B of the U.S. manual provides analytical tools used to understand the operational environment. Specifically related to the human terrain are map overlays which graphically depict information on race, religion and ethnicity, and most importantly, population support, showing sectors of the population that are pro-government, anti-government, pro-insurgent, anti-insurgent, uncommitted and neutral. In addition, the annex describes a tool called the ‘Perception Assessment Matrix.’ Given the assumption that population perceptions, more than reality, should drive a commander’s decision-making, this matrix draws its assessment by comparing demographic analysis and cultural intelligence, understanding history, observing reactions and key activities, and monitoring editorials and opinions in newspapers.⁶⁵ Finally, the annex presents the ‘Social Network Analysis’, a tool designed primarily for understanding the organizational dynamics of an insurgency and how best to attack or exploit it, but which the manual suggests could be used in counterinsurgency in order to provide “... a picture of the population.”⁶⁶ Of these three techniques, only the population support overlay would require the input of information obtained from opinion polling or other methods of surveying the population.

To summarize the information obtained from the U.S. Army and Marine Corps counterinsurgency manual, although it emphasises the importance of understanding the

⁶⁴US Army, *Counterinsurgency*, 5-31.

⁶⁵*Ibid.*, B-6 – B-8.

⁶⁶*Ibid.*, B-10.

population and winning support of the population, as well as the requirement to assess the effects of the campaign on the population, surveying of the population is mentioned briefly only twice in this publication of two hundred forty-one pages. It is significant however, that stress is placed on understanding and influencing the people's perceptions. The document rightly recognizes that it does not matter how successfully military forces may think their campaign is going, referring back to Templar's statement with respect to 'hearts and minds', it is the people's perception of who is winning that counts.

Incidentally, the report mentioned in Chapter 3 above, released by the head of ISAF intelligence, indicates that U.S. forces in Afghanistan have not been following their own counterinsurgency doctrine very closely. The report criticizes the U.S. intelligence community for being too focused on the enemy and not on the people of Afghanistan, arguing that because U.S. intelligence has focused on insurgent groups, "... our intelligence apparatus still finds itself unable to answer fundamental questions about the environment in which we operate and the people we are trying to protect and persuade."⁶⁷

The authors use the analogy of an election campaign in which all effort is spent on attacking the opposition and none on understanding the electorate. They outline a new direction for information gathering in the Afghanistan campaign including select teams of analysts collecting information at local levels from all government organizations as well as willing non-government organizations, and integrating this information along geographic, as opposed to functional, lines by providing comprehensive district assessments.⁶⁸ Organizing this information along geographic lines recognizes that

⁶⁷Flynn et al, *Fixing Intel...*, 4.

⁶⁸*Ibid.*, 4-5.

insurgencies and other interventions will have differing characteristics among regions within the area of operations and attempting to apply general homogeneous policies without understanding the effect they will have within each region is perilous. This issue is discussed further below.

Like its U.S. counterpart, the CF counterinsurgency manual places great importance on the requirement to understand and address the grievances of the population in order to "... create enduring solutions to conflict."⁶⁹ This type of language echoes Moore's assessment of counterinsurgency, as described above, as not so much a war to be won as a conflict to be resolved. Because "... the exercise of political power depends upon the tacit or explicit agreement of the population or, at least, on its submissiveness,"⁷⁰ counterinsurgency forces must work to disrupt insurgent attempts to influence the population. Therefore, the population and its culture must be analyzed in order to understand its grievances and motivations and how these may be targeted by the insurgent.⁷¹ The Canadian manual implies that a comprehensive approach must be taken in a counterinsurgency campaign, with the military's main role being "... to create a security framework that precludes the ability of insurgents to undertake offensive operations," while working "... in co-operation with other agencies addressing the non-military aspects of the security environment in order to solve the root causes and grievances that led to conflict and insurgency."⁷² Notwithstanding the principle role of

⁶⁹Department of National Defence, *Counterinsurgency Operations* (Ottawa: DND Canada, 2008), 1-2.

⁷⁰DND, *Counterinsurgency Operations*, 1-17.

⁷¹*Ibid.*

the military of providing a security framework, the military commander must understand the big picture, including the human terrain, and be able to recognize changes in the environment, "...especially ones that require a change to the major theme of a campaign. ... This is part of the art of war."⁷³

The observations made above concerning the importance of tribalism and of the emotional element of support in an insurgency, and echoing Thompson's assessment of why people join an insurgency, are supported in the Canadian manual:

Not all followers of an insurgency will necessarily adhere to or even comprehend the political agenda of the insurgency. A good number of participants may simply join through family, clan or other social links. Others may simply join to seek retribution for other grievances on a personal level.⁷⁴

The manual links this notion with the requirement to understand the characteristics of the human terrain at as local a level as possible: "Therefore, even the motivation and ideology of insurgents will be difficult to view in a monolithic or holistic sense. The characteristics of an insurgency will vary at the local level and must be viewed and assessed from this context."⁷⁵ The importance of understanding local dynamics is emphasised in the U.S. *Fixing Intel* publications as well: "In fact, top decision-makers and their staffs emphatically do need to understand the sub-national situation down to district level. For the most part, this is precisely where we are fighting the war, which means, inevitably, this is where it will be won or lost."⁷⁶

⁷²DND, *Counterinsurgency Operations*, 1-8.

⁷³*Ibid.*

⁷⁴*Ibid.*, 2-5.

⁷⁵*Ibid.*

⁷⁶Flynn et al, *Fixing Intel...*, 11.

Various methods are proposed as to how the human terrain is to be analyzed in order to gain a detailed understanding of it. Military patrols can be used to gauge public reaction to civil-military or other influence activities. In order for this method to be successful, however, military forces must make themselves accessible to the people. Not only does this offer insight into the local population, it also helps to gain support for the coalition and may encourage locals to provide information on insurgent intentions and activities.⁷⁷ In addition to information gained from military forces, the host nation government can provide advice "... regarding the perception and attitudes of its own population and their view of coalition actions."⁷⁸ Finally, like the U.S. publication, measures of campaign effectiveness are proposed. Unlike the U.S. version, however, the Canadian publication's list contains very few indicators that could make use of some form of population survey to provide the information required to measure them. Table 4.2 shows the list of indicators provided in the Canadian counterinsurgency manual and suggests possible sources that could be used in order to measure these indicators:

⁷⁷DND, *Counterinsurgency Operations*, 3-9 and 5-23 - 5-26.

⁷⁸*Ibid.*, 4-2.

Table 4.2 – Suggested Information Sources for Canadian COIN Measure of Effectiveness Indicators

Measure of Effectiveness Indicator ⁷⁹	Possible Information Source
Number of Murders/Killings	Police Reports
Number of insurgent attacks on government buildings/government personnel/security forces	Police Reports/Host Nation Government
Number of Violent Incidents and Levels of Crime	Police Reports/Population Survey
Number and Intensity of Public Demonstrations	Police Reports/Military Patrols
State of Civil Services (sanitary collection/schools/government offices)	Host Nation Government/ Population Survey
Police Station Manning and Equipping and Profile of Police	Police/Host Nation Government/ Population Survey
Commercial Activities (shops and markets)	Military Patrols
Public Activities in Urban Areas (especially at night)	Military Patrols

It is clear that the reason there are only two indicators in the table above which could use information provided by population surveys is that none of the other indicators are measures of public perception. The measures of effectiveness described above may be somewhat misleading, however. Although the manual links these measures to understanding the overall success of the campaign, it describes them as representing the security situation only.⁸⁰ In a subsequent chapter devoted to information operations and influence activities, it is suggested that measures of effectiveness should be developed that, in addition to tracking the effects of influence activities on the adversary's actions and capabilities, also track changes in the attitude of the civilian population.⁸¹ The ambiguity of separate measures of effectiveness for influence activities may be confusing

⁷⁹DND, *Counterinsurgency Operations*, 6-27.

⁸⁰*Ibid.*

⁸¹*Ibid.*, 8-7 -8-8.

for the practitioner. In any case, although no specific tools are offered as to how to track changes in the attitude of the civilian population, it is proposed that collection of information from sources such as population surveys may have to be assisted by non-military agencies.⁸² It does not go so far as to suggest that population surveys could be sponsored by the military.

Like the U.S. publication, the Canadian manual does emphasize the need for an understanding of the various power structures within society and within the insurgency. It is suggested that regional centres of gravity could be groups or tribes whose support may be key to long-term success: “Each centre of gravity will have to be analyzed in order to determine its critical requirements and critical vulnerabilities. ... For example, a specific tribe supporting an insurgency may have done so out of historic marginalization by a central government.”⁸³ Although no analysis tool is provided like the ‘Social Network Analysis’ contained in the U.S. publication, the Canadian manual advises that key leaders, whether elected, appointed or traditional, should be engaged, especially early in a campaign, in order to develop a plan customized for the unique grievances and expectations of the people of each particular region.⁸⁴ A committee system is advocated which includes military, police and civil officials at all levels from national down to towns and districts.⁸⁵ How this system avoids marginalizing traditional or tribal leaders

⁸²DND, *Counterinsurgency Operations*, 7-16.

⁸³*Ibid.*, 5-15.

⁸⁴*Ibid.*, 5-24.

⁸⁵*Ibid.*, 6-30 – 6-32.

is not explained and, therefore, is left up to the commander to work out based on the peculiarities of human terrain dynamics in each campaign and local area.

In summary, the Canadian counterinsurgency manual is similar to the U.S. version in that it emphasises the need to understand and address the grievances of the population. It also stresses that the local situations with respect to the insurgency and the population will vary from area to area and therefore must be assessed from the bottom up. The Canadian manual provides various methods of analyzing and understanding the human terrain, including engaging leadership at all levels and understanding power structures, ensuring that the military is accessible to the population and gathering information on indicators that measure the effectiveness of the campaign. The Canadian publication appears to place less emphasis on the population's perceptions, however, and makes no mention of the use of opinion polling or other methods of population surveys.

That said, the CF has been utilizing opinion polling during its operations in Afghanistan for the last three years, and other forces have used various methods of surveying the population as well. The next chapter will examine methods in use with a view to assessing their usefulness for future military operations.

CHAPTER 5

METHODS USED

Prior to examining recent methods that militaries have used to survey populations, it is helpful to look at the topic of measuring population perception from a broader perspective in order to give context to the methods used by militaries. Although it was explained in the introduction to this paper that the usefulness of population surveys is being examined primarily with respect to how they can be used to assist a military commander in understanding the human terrain, the concept of using information gathered from surveys as aids to measures of campaign effectiveness is important for this examination as well. The two aims are closely linked in any discussion of population perceptions. Sarah Jane Meharg, Senior Research Associate of the Pearson Peacekeeping Centre, suggests that Western militaries emphasize the need for designing measures of effectiveness and metrics for operations in an attempt to give the illusion of control over the operating environment: “If they have the metrics right, logic suggests that they must be doing the right activities.”⁸⁶ However, Meharg argues, it is virtually impossible to measure ‘the human condition’, especially in a crisis environment where the variables are constantly changing.⁸⁷ The future operating environment described in Chapter 1 certainly qualifies as such a ‘crisis environment’. Meharg cites the work of Colonel John Agoglia, former director of the U.S. Army’s Peacekeeping and Stability Institute. Agoglia argues that the process of military planning, whereby a logical process is used to

⁸⁶Sarah Jane Meharg, *Measuring What Matters in Peace Operations and Crisis Management* (Kingston, Canada: School of Policy Studies, Queen’s University, McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2009), 35.

⁸⁷Meharg, *Measuring What Matters...*, 12.

ensure the right problem is being studied in order to present decision-makers with sound options for how to go about solving the problem, does not address the issue of ‘doing the problem right’. Measures of effectiveness differ from military planning because they “... are built upon polling, group surveys, and expert opinions,” and traditionally Western militaries have not been trained in this competency.⁸⁸ It is for this reason, perhaps, that few of the indicators suggested in the Canadian counterinsurgency manual as measures of campaign effectiveness, as discussed in Chapter 3, could be satisfied by population surveys. The indicators require quantifiable data, as opposed to the sort of subjective assessment gained from measuring perceptions. In fact, with respect to measures of effectiveness of influence activities, the Canadian manual acknowledges the challenge of tracking changes in attitudes: “Given all of the individual and environmental variables in the human decision-making process, developing MoE for Info Ops (information operations) on the cognitive plane may be one of the most daunting intellectual tasks facing a commander.”⁸⁹

It is not just militaries, however, that have difficulty with measures of effectiveness. Meharg points out that other stakeholders in interventions, such as humanitarian agencies, face similar challenges:

Mechanisms for measuring effectiveness have not kept ahead of day-to-day operational imperatives within the context of complex operations Most sectors have been slow to acknowledge the importance of the views and opinions of its clients – the populations affected by conflicts and natural disasters.”⁹⁰

⁸⁸Meharg, *Measuring What Matters...*, 64.

⁸⁹DND, *Counterinsurgency Operations*, 8-8.

⁹⁰Sarah Jane Meharg, *Measuring Effectiveness in Complex Operations: What is Good Enough* (Calgary, AB: Canadian Defence and Foreign Affairs Institute, October 2009), 5.

Meharg suggests another reason militaries, and other agencies involved in complex interventions, tend to rely on quantifiable data:

There is much political pressure on organizations who report to their donors, governments, and constituencies to have strong arguments supporting effectiveness. When politicians have the choice between using statistics or narratives, they expound the numbers when related to short-term effectiveness....⁹¹

Given the importance of understanding population perceptions, however, it makes sense that military commanders should look for methods of achieving this.

In an examination of British military efforts to measure effectiveness in Afghanistan, Stuart Gordon addresses the issue of tracking quantifiable data versus attitude changes of a population. Like Meharg, Gordon argues that the complexity of modern operational environments tends to cause militaries to look for tangible elements to measure, "... particularly project 'inputs' and 'outputs' – i.e. money spent and buildings constructed rather than higher order 'purpose' or 'goals' – such as the impact of a 'building' or 'service' on a community's attitudes."⁹² Although measuring inputs rather than outcomes is easier, "... it also has the potential to distort planning, encouraging the confusion of strategic progress with 'resource inputs' and 'raw' outputs."⁹³ In an effort to address the shortcomings of these approaches, the UK Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) for Helmand Province in southern Afghanistan

⁹¹Meharg, *Measuring Effectiveness in Complex Operations...*, 6.

⁹²Stuart Gordon, "Measures of Effectiveness: Examining the United Kingdom in Afghanistan," in *Measuring What Matters in Peace Operations and Crisis Management*, ed. Sarah Jane Meharg, 177-182 (Kingston, Canada: School of Policy Studies, Queen's University, McGill-Queen's University Press, 2009), 180.

⁹³Gordon, "Measures of Effectiveness..." 180.

and the UK military adapted the methodology of Dr Jim Derleth and instituted the Tactical Conflict Assessment Framework (TCAF). The TCAF is a method of population survey that focuses on identifying the grievances within a society so that they can be addressed, and support for the insurgency can be denied, limited, or neutralized. The following four questions were asked by soldiers on patrol:

1. Has the population of your village changed in the last twelve months?
2. What is the greatest problem facing your village right now?
3. Who do you trust to resolve your problems?
4. Of your problems, what would you solve first?⁹⁴

These questions were followed by in-depth interviews of key leaders and shuras with community leaders and representatives in order to track changes in the population's sense of grievances and thereby direct reconstruction and development projects, as well as to gather data to contribute to measures of effectiveness.⁹⁵ The TCAF approach appears useful for two reasons. First, it appears to be a very practical method of gathering information as the short four questions can be asked by soldiers on patrol instead of requiring the hiring of local contractors or the deployment into theatre of civilians to do opinion polling. Ensuring the security of these civilians would place an additional burden on military forces as well. Secondly, the method combines gathering information on population perceptions with key leader engagements. As discussed above, the importance of community and tribal leadership in influencing the perceptions and attitudes of populations in the societies of developing countries, where the reach of central government influence is limited, cannot be understated.

⁹⁴Gordon, "Measures of Effectiveness...", 180.

⁹⁵*Ibid.*, 181 and David Wilson and Gareth E. Conway, "The Tactical Conflict Assessment Framework: A Short-lived Panacea," *The RUSI Journal* 154, no.1 (February 2009): 11.

Unfortunately, only a year after the trial was started, the method was discontinued by UK forces in Afghanistan as "... it was not considered the best method to measure what it intended to and, secondly, because with increased stability in (Helmand) Province, other mechanisms became possible which offered greater utility."⁹⁶ In an article published in the February 2009 edition of *The RUSI Journal*, David Wilson and Gareth E. Conway describe several of the difficulties that led to abandoning the TCAF method. First of all, rather than using standardized ordering and wording of the four questions, the soldiers conducting the surveys were conducting the surveys more like a guided discussion. This meant that it was hard to obtain quantitative data that could be assessed statistically. Notwithstanding that British soldiers are trained to be culturally aware and respectful of the host nation's population, the authors argue, "... they are not as experienced as social scientists, ...nor are they experienced interviewers with a high level of ability to ask questions consistently and probe respondents in order to gain more relevant or more complete answers without biasing the data in any way."⁹⁷ Variation in the surveys was compounded by the issue of having to use interpreters, meaning that questions and responses were filtered by the interpreters' understanding of them, as well as the soldiers' understanding of the interpreted response. Also, the interviews were conducted in public places, which can affect the candidness of responses as well as the lack of variation in the sample as only those willing to speak to the soldiers in public are interviewed. In Afghanistan society, especially in the South, this means that no women were interviewed. Add to this those who were unwilling to speak to the soldiers in public

⁹⁶Wilson and Conway, "The Tactical Conflict Assessment Framework....," 10.

⁹⁷*Ibid.*, 12-13.

out of fear of recriminations from insurgents and it becomes obvious that the majority of the population could not be interviewed. Honesty of responses was called into question as well. The authors point out that "... it is often said that in Afghanistan people will tell you what they think you want to hear."⁹⁸ Likely this is especially true if a question is asked by an armed soldier.

Other problems observed with the TCAF method included the difficulty in interviewing sufficient numbers from each geographic area, due to the security situation in many areas of the province. For example, the high threat of suicide bombers in certain areas made it difficult for soldiers to approach locals to collect data. This resulted in so few reports collected in many areas that statistical analysis was not possible. In some areas, it was observed that the few who were willing to engage with patrols were being asked the same questions over and over, and expecting their grievances to be addressed, creating frustration and disillusionment, and undermining the credibility of the international coalition. Finally, TCAF did not measure against the UK campaign plan's lines of operation.⁹⁹ According to the *Canadian Forces Operational Planning Process* manual, lines of operation are critical paths to a desired end state which a commander uses "... to synchronize and integrate capabilities ... as well as ensure that military effort is coordinated with the actions of other elements of national power"¹⁰⁰ As a result of this long list of TCAF's shortcomings, the UK military force in Helmand Province eventually abandoned the method and had district stabilization advisers and civil-military

⁹⁸Wilson and Conway, "The Tactical Conflict Assessment Framework...", 13.

⁹⁹*Ibid.*, 14-15.

¹⁰⁰Department of National Defence, B-GJ-005-500/FP-000-CFJP-5.0 *The Canadian Forces Operational Planning Process* (Ottawa: DND Canada, 2008), 2-2.

(CIMIC) officers move out of the provincial capital and live within the major population centres where they could engage with district governors, mayors and local tribal leaders on a daily basis. Therefore, instead of a method that combined population surveys with key leader engagements, the UK military opted to gain understanding of the human terrain entirely through engagement with leaders. As Wilson and Conway explain:

Through these Afghan structures, developing trust and rapport over time, our understanding of the local dynamics and local priorities quickly grew. ... Our intimate linkage with local leaders very quickly eclipsed the ability of TCAF to deliver not just understanding, but also results.¹⁰¹

Wilson and Conway suggest that the TCAF might be of better use for what they refer to as “less formal endeavours”, such as “... urgent requests for information pertaining to *why* a situation on the ground has emerged,” or in order to gather ‘atmospherics’ “... to feed into the general intelligence picture.”¹⁰²

What must be kept in mind in the analysis of the utility of the TCAF is that it was being used primarily to direct reconstruction and development efforts and then to track responses over time in order to guide military decisions, as well as to assess the effects of those decisions on population perception. The solution of having district stabilization advisers and CIMIC officers living within major population centres and engaging with leaders certainly would help with directing reconstruction efforts. It is not immediately apparent, however, how this arrangement would help with generating a narrative that tracks changes in the population’s sense of grievances, unless the attitudes of local leaders was deemed a sufficient representation of population perception.

¹⁰¹Wilson and Conway, “The Tactical Conflict Assessment Framework...,” 14.

¹⁰²*Ibid.*, 15.

Population perception is precisely what the Kandahar Polls were designed to assess. Using local civilian contractors, nine polls were conducted for the Canadian military in Kandahar Province between February 2007 and April 2009 in order to assess campaign progress, guide public message campaigns and provide general situational awareness of local attitudes and perceptions.¹⁰³ The polls asked a series of questions first gathering information on respondent demographics, including age, gender, tribe, occupation and education, followed by questions related to opinions of security and Taliban versus coalition influence, development (including infrastructure, healthcare and education) and prosperity, and government progress and influence.¹⁰⁴ The designers of the polls offer low bias and low cost compared with other information sources as advantages of using this method of information gathering.¹⁰⁵ While the point regarding cost begs many questions which are beyond the scope of this paper to address, the issue of bias should be questioned. According to the Canadian Expeditionary Forces Command (CEFCOM) Operational Research Team, the polls are "... relatively unbiased ... because for the most part, respondents have little incentive to misrepresent facts for personal advantage ..."¹⁰⁶ It stands to reason that the respondents in these polls would expect that someone with influence on how and where development money is spent

¹⁰³Etienne Vincent, Philip Eles and Boris Vasilev, "Opinion Polling in Support of Counterinsurgency," Paper submitted for CORNWALLIS XIV, Centre for Operational Research and Analysis (Ottawa: Defence Research and Development Canada, not dated), 1.

¹⁰⁴Etienne Vincent, Philip Eles, A. Turnbull, P. Smith, Maj B. Chapman, D. Connell and LCdr E. Woodliffe, *Kandahar Province Survey: Wave 4 Summary – February 08* (Ottawa: Defence Research and Development Canada, not dated)

¹⁰⁵Vincent et al, "Opinion Polling in Support of Counterinsurgency," 2-3.

would have access to the results of the poll. There might be some motivation to base responses to the questions of the poll on an attempt to influence how development resources are directed.

The CEFCOM team outlines other challenges presented by conducting opinion polling in developing countries such as Afghanistan, including a poor communications infrastructure, lack of detailed maps, security issues, cultural barriers to freedom of expression, widespread illiteracy, absence of accurate population estimates and difficulty reaching large numbers of displaced persons.¹⁰⁷

As described in the discussion of the population surveys used in the TCAF method, opinion polls also need large and random samples in order for them to be effective. This is easier said than done in under-developed states where recent and reliable census data is hard to obtain. For example, the Kandahar polls use ‘multi-stage stratified cluster sampling’ which obtain lists of villages in all of the province’s districts, randomly selecting a household in the village, then pseudo-randomly selecting a member of the household (for cultural reasons, male pollsters only interviewed male members of households, and the same with female pollsters and female members of households). Therefore, the sample is not based on the population of the village (meaning smaller villages are over-represented) and not based on the size of the household (smaller households are over-represented).¹⁰⁸ The difficulty with inter-gender interactions means that some the villages have only male respondents and the others only female

¹⁰⁶Vincent et al, “Opinion Polling in Support of Counterinsurgency,” 3.

¹⁰⁷*Ibid.*, 2.

¹⁰⁸*Ibid.*, 5.

respondents. In addition, although no specifics in terms of numbers or percentages are given, difficulties with the expense of reaching some districts meant that a compromise had to be made between cost and the randomness of the sample.

Other difficulties with conducting the Kandahar polls were encountered due to the requirement to produce both district-level and province-wide results. Distributing interviews proportionally to the size of a district would have resulted in very few samples in the smaller districts (increasing the margin of error) or a very large sample size in the larger districts, which was beyond the resources available. As a result, a non-uniform sampling strategy was used and then this was compensated for by weighting district level results based on relative population sizes. Of course, this weighting could only be approximate based on the fact that only approximate district populations were known.¹⁰⁹ With respect to security concerns, the CEFKOM paper suggests that "... (t)he extent of the area where the polling contractor was unwilling to venture was often seen as an important polling result itself, indicative of the extent of insurgent influence."¹¹⁰ How this 'important polling result' is factored into the report is not explained. It is not mentioned anywhere in the summary report. Further, although the populations of the districts that were not sampled due to security concerns were small, these areas, where the insurgency has greatest control, are where an understanding of the population is most important.

Besides those systemic biases mentioned above (oversampling of population in smaller villages and smaller households, lack of accurate geographical information, and

¹⁰⁹Vincent et al, "Opinion Polling in Support of Counterinsurgency," 6-7.

¹¹⁰*Ibid.*, 7.

omission of regions that were too unsafe), other systemic biases mentioned in the CEFCOM paper are mistrust or misunderstanding of the intent of the poll, cultural norms discouraging criticism and potential bias of the interviewers.¹¹¹ The first two of these are closely related. It was reported that most of those interviewed thought that the interviewers were affiliated with the government (one could argue that they are, indirectly), and as observed above in the discussion of the TCAF, cultural norms might discourage criticism of the state or other institutions. With respect to the bias of the interviewers, they may have influenced the respondents either unintentionally or intentionally: "... an insurgency leaves few indifferent,"¹¹² as the CEFCOM team astutely points out. There is also the likelihood of subjectivity in how the polling results are analyzed and presented due to bias on the part of the analyst.¹¹³

The CEFCOM paper points out some important aspects of the design of the Kandahar polls. As mentioned above, the polls were deliberately designed to measure the population's perceptions and therefore ask subjective versus objective questions. Objective questions would attempt to gather factual data, but polls are probably not the most reliable tool as this kind of information can be very technical. Recall the discussion above concerning the measures of effectiveness indicators given in the CF counterinsurgency manual. A difficulty with using subjective questions, however, is that they are subject to the people's expectations which can change over time. An example given is that the people's expectation of their rights of freedom of expression may be

¹¹¹Vincent et al, "Opinion Polling in Support of Counterinsurgency," 10-11.

¹¹²*Ibid.*, 10.

¹¹³*Ibid.*, 18.

much higher now than when the Taliban was first ousted from power. In addition, the paper suggests that the people likely expect more from the government now than when it first came to power eight years ago.¹¹⁴ Another issue with the questionnaire design is the problem of using specific time periods in a culture that does not consider time very specifically. Therefore, a comparison of current and past situations is problematic. The difficulty can be overcome simply by asking the same question in successive waves and comparing the answers, but the questions would have to remain unchanged between polls and this was not always done with the Kandahar polls. The authors also point out that some topics do lend themselves more to questions about perceived change, such as level of prosperity.¹¹⁵

Finally, concerning shortfalls of the Kandahar polls, high margins of error and significant biases meant that attempts to extract deeper insight through complex linking was not possible, so most of the insight was provided by simple descriptive reporting.¹¹⁶

According to the paper,

... some simple relationships between things such as prolonged combat operations and reduced perceptions of security in given areas have been observed. However, little success has so far been achieved in matching polling results to other specific actions and policies.¹¹⁷

The authors help to justify this method of population survey by pointing out some of the shortfalls of other methods. Surveying people who frequent public places versus visiting their homes may provide greater anonymity for the respondents but, as was also

¹¹⁴Vincent et al, "Opinion Polling in Support of Counterinsurgency," 13.

¹¹⁵*Ibid.*, 14-15.

¹¹⁶*Ibid.*, 20-21.

discovered during the discussion regarding TCAF, this biases the poll towards people who frequent public places and against women.¹¹⁸ The tribal/cultural element is examined as well. The paper mentions other options such as polling just heads of households or local leaders, such as the method chosen by the UK forces after abandoning TCAF, or holding shuras, because when it comes to public perception and decision-making in Afghan society, the collective opinions of the local leaders are more important than individual opinions. In addition, there is a belief “... that many would feel freer to express negative or controversial opinions in this traditional context than in private conversation.”¹¹⁹ The authors felt that these options were not ideal as, for one thing, it was important to extract minority opinions and, for another, these methods were “... less conducive to a scientific approach, where margins of error must be quantified.”¹²⁰ Given the observations above regarding the difficulties with extracting anything more than simple descriptive reporting due to large margins of error, the utility of the Kandahar polls for a ‘scientific approach’ is questionable. Further, with respect to the tribes, the authors considered organizing poll results based on tribal affiliation (because of the importance of tribal affiliation in determining political loyalties and attitudes), but there was not enough demographic data or understanding of tribal hierarchies, including of sub-tribes, to do this. However, it is pointed out that the poll results are helping to provide data which furthers the understanding of the tribal map.¹²¹

¹¹⁸Vincent et al, “Opinion Polling in Support of Counterinsurgency,” 6.

¹¹⁹*Ibid.*

¹²⁰*Ibid.*

¹²¹*Ibid.*, 17.

It is apparent from the above discussion that there are many limitations with conducting opinion polling in developing, tribal societies, especially during times of conflict. All of the problems above were encountered, despite the fact that coalition forces were fortunate enough to be able to draw on existing local capacity to conduct the polls. The authors concede that for "... many regions subject to insurgency ... this capacity may not exist and must be developed further before polling can take place."¹²² The paper does not suggest, however, that opinion polls are the only method of collecting information on the human terrain. Rather, they can be used to supplement information gathered from key leader engagements and intelligence collection activities.¹²³ One important take-away from the report is that there were consistently high interview completion rates. The authors suggest that this may be due in part to the people's desire to make their voice heard.¹²⁴

It is apparent from the preceding discussion that while the conduct of opinion polling may provide a military commander with important insight into population perceptions, it is beyond the capacity of most Western militaries to conduct this activity themselves. The problems with uniformed and armed soldiers trying to extract honest and frank opinions from the population means that the polling would have to be done by non-uniformed military members, which raises ethical and legal questions in a theatre of operations, or by civilian employees of the military. Having permanent employees available to do this work would be impractical for all but the few largest military forces

¹²²Vincent et al, "Opinion Polling in Support of Counterinsurgency," 21.

¹²³*Ibid.*, 3.

¹²⁴*Ibid.*, 8.

in the world. In addition, constraints on a commander's time must be considered. Moyar asserts that effective counterinsurgency commanders devote a large portion of their time to touring the area of operations in order to assess leaders and exert their own personal leadership, as well as assessing the ground-truth situation, what he calls "comprehension of the war's dynamics."¹²⁵ In addition, relationships must be built with other coalition military leaders, indigenous forces, other government departments, non-governmental organizations, media and, most importantly, local leaders. Notwithstanding these constraints, information gleaned from population surveys as well as other methods of analysis can contribute significantly to the commander's understanding of the human terrain. The challenge may be met best by incorporating population survey results into the comprehensive district assessments produced by intelligence analyst teams as outlined in the U.S. *Fixing Intel* document described in Chapters 3 and 4 above.

¹²⁵Moyar, *A Question of Command...*, 281-282.

CHAPTER 6

SUMMARY OF ANALYSIS

Prior to offering concluding comments, it is useful to provide a summary of the major deductions gleaned from the analysis presented in the preceding chapters. With respect to the future operating environment, it has been shown that future armed conflict, like most armed conflict in the past century and much of it throughout history, is likely to have both conventional and nonconventional aspects to it. In addition, most interventions that Canada will take part in will occur in failed and failing states and, due to urbanization, globalization and Canada's acceptance of the UN doctrine of the 'Responsibility to Protect', are likely to be conducted among populations. The support of these populations will be crucial for ensuring the success of future interventions.

If future armed conflict is likely to be conducted among the people, whose support is essential, military commanders must be able to understand the complexities of the populations within their areas of operations: that is, the 'human terrain'. When the governments of developing, fragile or failed states are unable or unwilling to provide adequate leadership, this role is often fulfilled by tribal structures. The tribal system provides stability and resilience, especially in times of turmoil, as well as structures and networks that are adapted easily to armed conflict. Tribalism also arouses deep emotions and strong loyalties which can be exploited. Therefore, understanding tribal societies, especially the power structures within and among them, is essential. This task can be very difficult due to the complex and fluid nature of the leadership and alliances of tribal societies. Tribal leaders must be engaged by military commanders, and an understanding of local population perceptions can help commanders understand which leaders have the

potential to garner support among these societies, which are more likely to support the government or the insurgency, what might be likely to sway their support, as well as what might indicate a shift in their allegiance. Opinion polling may provide a means of gauging local population perceptions.

Doctrine should be consulted when considering implementing new techniques or procedures. Doctrine should guide by providing military forces with a common approach through techniques and procedures, but it requires judgement in implementation and should not constrain initiative and imagination. The Canadian Peace Support Operations manual and new Canadian Counterinsurgency manual, as well as the U.S. Army and Marine Corps Counterinsurgency manual were consulted in this study. The Peace Support manual makes no mention of using population surveys to assist in detecting any violation of agreements, or potential conflicts within the civil population or between the population and security forces. The U.S. counterinsurgency manual stresses the importance of understanding the population and advises that the main objective in counterinsurgency operations is legitimacy in the eyes of the people. In addition, changes in local attitudes are seen as essential in order to assess the effects of targeting, both in terms of kinetic targeting and influence activities. Little mention is made, however, of the utility of any form of population survey in assessing local perceptions and attitudes. Even an analytical tool known as the 'Perception Assessment Matrix', is described as requiring demographic analysis, cultural intelligence, history, observation of reactions and key events and monitoring local media, but no mention is made of the advantages of population surveys in contributing to this assessment. In the brief mention that population surveys do receive in the manual, it is suggested that local leaders will

play a part in this activity. This suggestion is ambiguous and is not likely to be effective if population surveys are being used to understand local leaders, as mentioned in the discussion of tribalism and understanding the human terrain.

The Canadian counterinsurgency manual is similar to the U.S. manual in that it places emphasis on the requirement to understand the population, especially the grievances of the population in order that these might be addressed. The importance of tribal allegiance as motivation for joining an insurgency, or in many cases *de facto* being considered a part of the insurgency, is recognized. Emphasis is put on key leader engagements as a method of understanding the various power structures within the indigenous society. The manual explains that population perceptions, attitudes and motivations could vary significantly among regions within the area of operations, therefore regionally-based understanding is necessary in order to produce regionally-focused policies. Measures of campaign effectiveness are proposed but these focus almost entirely on quantifiable data focused on the immediately noticeable security situation and therefore are not designed to measure perceptions and motivations. The manual does recommend measuring the effects of influence activities on population perception in a separate chapter, however having measures of effectiveness for influence activities separate from those of the overall campaign is confusing. In addition, it appears to diminish the importance of population perception on the overall success of the counterinsurgency campaign. Collecting information from non-military agencies is put forth as a means of understanding population perceptions, but population surveys sponsored by the military are not included as a means of tracking the effectiveness of influence activities or of understanding the human terrain in general.

In looking at methods currently in use by militaries in their efforts to understand the human terrain, the difficulty of this practise has been described due to the complexity involved with trying to measure the human condition, especially in complex and dynamic environments. Military planning traditionally has been more oriented towards doing the right job as opposed to doing the job right. Because of the relative simplicity of examining quantifiable data as opposed to subjective assessments, analysts naturally shy away from the more difficult task. In addition, pressure from political masters who are anxious to provide statistics to their voting public through the news media, also tends to favour quantifiable indicators as opposed to subjective ideas and concepts. Yet population perception is critical in interventions among populations and this is subjective. Meharg summarizes the issue as follows: “A dominant debate is that narratives do not suffice in measuring effectiveness, while numbers and scores do not suffice in capturing ground truth.”¹²⁶

In 2008, the British military attempted to use the Tactical Conflict Assessment Framework tool in order to identify grievances among the population of Helmand Province in Afghanistan, thereby being able to direct development projects in the province. This was seen as a practical method that used military patrols to conduct population surveys followed up by detailed key leader engagements conducted by senior personnel responsible for directing development projects. Unfortunately this method was short-lived because it became very difficult to standardize methods with the soldiers conducting the surveys, interpreters having to be used, and difficulties with obtaining large enough sample sizes. Once the method was abandoned, the senior personnel

¹²⁶Meharg, *Measuring Effectiveness in Complex Operations...*, 6.

responsible for developments simply used key leader engagements as their sole method of directing projects. One is left wondering what was left for the military leaders to use in order to help them understand the population and identify grievances and perceptions.

Although opinion polling is given no mention in the Canadian Forces counterinsurgency manual, the practice has been conducted by local agencies in Afghanistan for three years, sponsored by the Canadian military operational command responsible for the mission. The Kandahar polls were designed to assess the progress of the campaign, guide public message campaigns and provide general situational awareness of population perceptions. The polls are not without problems. There is likely to be bias based on the influence of both interviewers and analysers, and also based on respondents trying to influence things such as development projects. Poor communications infrastructure and security concerns mean that often the areas that information is needed most on cannot be polled. The sampling is influenced by inaccurate information on villages and districts and by the difficulty with obtaining large enough and random enough samples. Analysing the information from the polls is made difficult because it is difficult to measure perceptions and expectations over time and also because high margins of error and biases make it difficult to extract complex linkages from the data.

There is a strong case to be made that in many tribal societies, the opinions of local leaders are more important than the majority of the population because these leaders have a very strong influence on the perceptions of the people. Once leaders are selected, most of the people trust and expect their leaders to make political decisions for them without a lot of consultation with the majority. Nonetheless, the people have a subtle but important influence over the selection of these leaders. Therefore, the opinions of the

populations are important to understand, including minority opinions. Opinion polls are important also in that they can show differences among the population not just by region but between different segments as well. As Meharg explains, these differences are important: “Moreover, areas of operations are not homogenous entities so it becomes critical to understand for whom intervention is making a difference, and which segments of a population are experiencing positive results attributed to intervention activities.”¹²⁷ Opinion polls that ask about ethnicity and tribal affiliation also help commanders understand the tribal map in an area of operations.

The many obstacles that have the potential of limiting the utility of opinion polling in an area of operations indicate that campaigns either must be given a chance to mature enough in order for an effective polling structure to be put in place, or the capacity to conduct opinion polls should already be present in the country or region. Otherwise this method of measuring population perception is not suitable and other options such as military patrols gathering atmospherics, intelligence analytical tools, and key leader engagements should be relied on. For example, Flynn et al found that a battalion of U.S. Marines, operating in an isolated province in Southern Afghanistan where there was very little infrastructure, were able to understand the people in their zone of influence by distributing intelligence analysts down to the company level. Information was collated from military patrols, notes from meetings with local leaders, the observations of civil affairs personnel and other sources. Understanding local personalities and local grievances allowed the Marines to drive a wedge between the

¹²⁷Meharg, *Measuring Effectiveness in Complex Operations...*, 2.

insurgents and the greater population.¹²⁸ Ideally, an understanding of the human terrain will be realized using all of the methods described above, including opinion polling.

¹²⁸Flynn et al, *Fixing Intel...*, 13-15.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

If doctrine is designed to provide guidance to military operations based on best practises, the conduct of opinion polling in interventions that are likely to be conducted among populations should be part of Canadian Forces doctrine. It is apparent from the discussion above that most military operations in the next few decades will be conducted among populations, and that it will be vital for military commanders to understand the complexities of the population. In order to provide an understanding of population perceptions and attitudes, the Canadian Forces Expeditionary Forces Command (CEFCOM) has commissioned the conduct of several opinion polls over the past few years in the Canadian area of operations within the current counterinsurgency campaign in Afghanistan. The lessons learned from the conduct of these opinion polls should be incorporated into Canadian Forces publications. Although the counterinsurgency manual would seem a logical publication to hold much of this information, the *Peace Support Operations* and more generally *Canadian Forces Operations* manuals should make mention of the utility of opinion polling as well. Specifically, with respect to the counterinsurgency manual, the confusion surrounding measures of campaign effectiveness which focus on security, and separate measures of effectiveness related to influence activities, should be clarified.

Exact methods of conducting opinion polling and incorporating these results into policies will be up to commanders and will vary depending on the nature of the mission and the uniqueness of each operating environment, remembering that doctrine should not be so prescriptive as to stifle initiative and intuition. It has been shown that in most

regions where interventions are likely to occur, population motivations and attitudes tend to vary from region to region within an area of operations. Most grievances are local. Therefore the use of select teams of analysts organized along geographic lines, as directed by Major-General Flynn of the U.S. Army, would seem to be the best way to incorporate opinion polling teams. Canada would have the capacity to contribute to these teams if operating as part of a coalition, but also may be able to generate its own regional analysis team based on a Whole-of-Government approach.

Conducting opinion polling is not the only method of understanding the human terrain. The military commander can employ many tools including the atmospherics perceived by patrols, the analysis provided by intelligence models, understanding gained by meeting with key local leaders and information provided by civil-military affairs teams and outside sources as well. If circumstances are favourable, opinion polling can be combined with other methods and contribute significantly to the commander's comprehension. Sirs Robert Thompson and Gerald Templar's shrewd understanding of the importance played by the population in Malaya has been shown to be equally applicable to modern operations and is certain to continue to apply in the future. Indeed, Thompson's assertion that was offered at the beginning of this paper can be expanded upon. Not only do the people know who is winning, but they also know why they are winning and how they are winning. Commanders would do well to solicit their opinions.

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