

# Technical Perspective

by Chief Warrant Officer 5 David J. Bassili  
Chief Warrant Officer of the MI Corps  
U.S. Army Intelligence Center of Excellence



Greetings once again from the edge of the frontier. By now, two things should have occurred as we begin the next fiscal year—a vast majority of the 19-02 movers are settling into one of their top choice assignments, and we know our future chief warrant officers 3, 4, and 5 (admittedly, this one might not have occurred). Regardless, congratulations on both accounts! A promotion and a new assignment are opportunities for continued service and the development of your technical expertise in a new environment and with new responsibilities.



Permanent changes of station (PCS) and the annual promotion board are arguably the most stressful events for you and your family. While many factors help produce individual desired results, most are out of our hands at the decisive point of action...assignment slating and board file voting. The only things any of us actually control are our performance and our ability to ensure our “data” is current and available to those making decisions during these two events. To assist in this effort, the Army provides every officer access to the My Board File and the Assignment Interactive Module version 2 (AIM 2.0) tools to ensure our individual and family readiness to compete for a promotion and a new assignment. I cannot stress enough how important it is for each of you to take advantage of these tools.

My mention of Army tools is an excellent segue to the topic of this quarter’s *Military Intelligence Professional Bulletin* (MIPB)—intelligence preparation of the battlefield (IPB). IPB is the fundamental tool for all intelligence professionals in understanding how terrain and weather affect friendly and enemy capabilities and in determining threat courses of action. Though doctrinally defined as a “staff” function, more often than not this task falls squarely on the shoulders of the intelligence professionals in the formation. In reality, IPB is all about sense-making—sorting through large swathes of data to portray a clear and understandable picture for a decision maker. We can compare the utilization of IPB as it relates to both a PCS and a promotion board. That’s right, I am going to demonstrate how you can use the four-step

IPB process to determine your success in getting the job you want or charting a path to that next promotion.

*Define the operational environment.* Instead of diving into the relative and significant characteristics within the area of operation/area of influence and identifying what we do not know, look at what we know. The first step of IPB for a PCS or promotion board is an email notification from your career coach at Human Resources Command (HRC) and/or a Military Personnel (MILPER) message defining the steps you must take to ensure

readiness for the event. In preparing for a PCS, this phase happens in two steps: (1) receipt of an officer-identified-to-move message from HRC and (2) the opening of the AIM 2.0 marketplace to identify available vacancies. For a promotion board, the MILPER message defines when the board will convene and when the My Board File application is open and closed. It also indicates the steps an officer can take to update their file. The area of operation and area of influence are now set, and you should know what gaps exist in your individual and family readiness to prepare for the next steps.

*Describe the environmental effects on operations.* While not necessarily a threat model, a modified combined obstacle overlay, a weather effects matrix, or an ASCOPE<sup>1</sup> briefing, many tools are available that help describe what assignments are the right ones for an individual and the baseline for career progression and success. These tools include DA Pam 600-3, *Officer Professional Development and Career Management*, and the included career maps and descriptions of expected knowledge and experience by grade; Active Component Manning Guidance messages; military occupational specialty (MOS) shortage messages; and promotion board after action reports describing trends relative to promotion selection. Using these resources, an individual can compare their personnel file, through a critical lens, with their assignment history and career goals. These tools can help assess the likelihood of landing that assignment in Florida or the chance of selection to the next grade. In the end though, much like the enemy always getting a vote, Army

requirements very much drive outcomes for both assignments and promotions...Murphy's Law.

*Evaluate the threat.* While I make no purposeful attempt to equate Army processes to traditional threats, considerations and actions (or inactions) surrounding an individual officer or their family could prevent a specific assignment or detract from a promotion opportunity. As an example from the PCS standpoint, the Exceptional Family Member Program (EFMP) comes down to capacity at a given assignment location or failure of an individual officer to complete or maintain their EFMP currency. If a location or installation cannot provide specific medical care or has reached patient capacity, an officer's EFMP status will prevent assignment. As an example from a promotion board's standpoint, if an officer is competing for chief warrant officer 4 but has not attended the Warrant Officer Advanced Course and only possesses a high school education, that officer may be at risk for promotion. Similarly, if a chief warrant officer 2 holds an over-strength MOS, promotion opportunity to chief warrant officer 3 will likely be extremely competitive. As in IPB, identifying and assessing those aspects of your career and family that could potentially affect a future assignment or promotion can help define expectations of and threats to success.

*Determine threat courses of action.* In relation to this final step of IPB, the courses of action for determination are those an officer takes to mitigate the previously identified threats. Hasty IPB against a traditional threat is less than ideal; therefore, waiting until the last minute before

a PCS or promotion board is unlikely to result in success. Make a career plan, with branches and sequels. Take time to understand DA Pam 600-3, create a plan to balance your workload with taking those online college classes you keep putting off, have a candid conversation with your rater and senior rater about how to earn that most qualified evaluation, and probably most importantly, maintain your family readiness to maximize your assignment options. The AIM 2.0 marketplace is designed for you and units to interact with one another before any assignment decisions are made. Take the time to fill out your resume and reach out to points of contact for potential assignments, especially if that assignment billet lists the commander or senior intelligence officer. Never forget, you are your best career manager.

The Army's IPB process is a time-tested means of sense-making and predicting outcomes. While my correlation above may not be a perfect representation to all, as you take the time to read this month's contributions to MIPB, as well as ATP 2-01.3, *Intelligence Preparation of the Battlefield*, you may find that IPB has more applicability than simply a process used in military planning. Thank you all for your continued contributions to our Army, the Nation, and the Military Intelligence Corps. ✨

#### Endnote

1. ASCOPE—areas, structures, capabilities, organizations, people, and events.

### Always Out Front!



One of the most important legacies that today's senior leaders can leave with the Army is to mentor junior leaders to fight and win future conflicts. Mentoring develops great leaders to lead great Soldiers.

—DA Pam 600-3, *Officer Professional Development and Career Management*

