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Intelligence Preparation of The Battlefield



U.S. Marine Corps

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Preface

The purpose of this manual is to describe the fundamentals of intelligence preparation of the battlefield (IPB). It describes IPB, its use in directing the intelligence effort, and its role in driving the staff's planning for contingency or combat operations. It prescribes the procedures followed in performing IPB and illustrates the application of IPB in various situations.

This manual is intended to serve as a guide for the use of IPB by units of all types, at all echelons, across the entire spectrum of conflict, and during the conduct of any mission. It does not contain all the data required to conduct IPB, such as specific information on threat doctrine or equipment capabilities. Rather, it is intended as a guide for applying the fundamentals of the IPB process to any situation.

No part of this document should be construed as limiting commanders' freedom of action or committing commanders to a fixed or particular course of action (COA). Nor should it be construed to imply that all IPB products must be prepared by all commands in all situations. Commanders should apply the doctrine and information presented in this manual in any manner appropriate to their particular situation and mission.

This manual is intended for Army commanders and staffs at all echelons. It applies equally to the Active Component (AC), United States Army Reserve (USAR), and Army National Guard (ARNG). It is also intended to be of use to commanders and staffs of joint and combined commands; Marine and Naval forces; units of the Air Force; and the military forces of allied countries.

This field manual is printed in multicolors to clearly portray the IPB process. This color is unique to this manual and is not to be confused or related to the color keys normally associated with standard topographical symbols.

This manual does not implement any International Standardization Agreements.

Unless this publication states otherwise, masculine nouns and pronouns do not refer exclusively to men.

The proponent of this publication is the United States Army Intelligence Center and Fort Huachuca, Fort Huachuca, AZ. Send comments and recommendations on DA Form 2028 (Recommended Changes to Publications and Blank Forms) directly to Commander, US Army Intelligence Center and Fort Huachuca, ATTN: ATZS-TDL-D, Fort Huachuca, AZ 85613-6000.

Upon revision, this manual will be dual designated with the US Marine Corps as FM 34-130/FMFM 3-20-1.

INTELLIGENCE PREPARATION OF THE BATTLEFIELD

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

If I always appear prepared, it is because before entering on an undertaking, I have meditated for long and foreseen what may occur.

— Napoleon Bonaparte, 1831

IPB is the best process we have for understanding the battlefield and the options it presents to friendly and threat forces.

What is IPB?

IPB is a systematic, continuous process of analyzing the threat and environment in a specific geographic area. It is designed to support staff estimates and military decision making. Applying the IPB process helps the commander selectively apply and maximize his combat power at critical points in time and space on the battlefield by—

- Determining the threat's likely COA.
- Describing the environment your unit is operating within and the effects of the environment on your unit.

IPB is a continuous process which consists of four steps which you perform each time you conduct IPB:

- Define the battlefield environment.
- Describe the battlefield's effects.
- Evaluate the threat.
- Determine threat COAs.

The IPB process is continuous. You conduct IPB prior to and during the command's initial planning for an operation, but you also continue to perform IPB during the conduct of the operation. Each function in the process is performed continuously to ensure that—

- The products of IPB remain complete and valid.
- You provide support to the commander and direction to the intelligence system throughout the current mission and into preparation for the next.

A brief overview of each function is presented below. For a thorough discussion, see Chapter 2.

Step 1. Define the Battlefield Environment

In step 1 of the IPB process, the G2/S2—

- Identifies characteristics of the battlefield which will influence friendly and threat operations.
- Establishes the limits of the area of interest (AI).
- Identifies gaps in current intelligence holdings.

This focuses the command's initial intelligence collection efforts and the remaining steps of the IPB process.