

# Intelligence Within the MIGs

A running estimate

by Maj Trustun G. Connor

To meet the challenges and opportunities demanded by a modern, rapidly evolving information environment, the Marine Corps is adapting and developing new capabilities and methods to fight and win in the information environment.<sup>1</sup> These capabilities require revised focus on battlespace awareness, primarily coming from the intelligence warfighting function. Within specific formations, significant reorganization efforts and strategic investments in people, training, and modernized equipment will enable the Service's ability to gain and maintain decision advantage against peer competitors while maintaining a balanced MAGTF capable of performing its assigned mission.

A key formation within these new capabilities is the MEF information group (MIG). The MIG was established to plan, coordinate, support, and conduct operations in the information environment (OIE). The MIG exploits information environment gaps and integrates information across all domains in support of all warfighting functions to gain operational advantages, increasing the overall lethality and survivability of the MEF against a peer threat.

*Reorganization and modernization efforts for the MIG have great potential to enhance a MAGTF commander's decision making in support of peer competition and missions across the range of military operations if intelligence doctrine, training, and equipment challenges are addressed.* Recent exercises and wargames identified process issues and organizational shortfalls. More specifically, PERSISTENT WARRIOR 19.1 confirmed the need to address doctrine, policy, structure, and training and education issues.

***"It's ... a lot of information for us to manage. It's at a rate faster than we can absorb. At the tactical level, we are over-saturated with that coming in."***

***—Gen David H. Berger***

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## Challenges

The MIG intelligence section is inadequately manned to operate a doctrinal intelligence section. Doctrinally, the intelligence effort is synchronized under the staff cognizance of the intelligence officer on the staff. The intelligence section, through the development of focused intelligence requirements, is responsible for intelligence operations and the production of analytical assessments. However, the MIG intelligence section has limited ability to execute intelligence operations and no production capability. Based on the personnel in the MIG intelligence section table of organization (T/O), the preponderance of the personnel's tasks are focused on security management, request for information coordination, and other administrative and collateral duties. The current structure of the MIG has intelligence personnel dispersed through the intelligence and the operations sections. Some personnel are in non-intelligence-specific billets, and others are filling intelligence roles in the operations section. For example, the MIGs are structured as

follows: I/II/III MIG S-3: 2691 Master Gunnery Sergeant Operations Chief, Chief Warrant Officer 4 2602 Assistant Current Operations Officer, Gunnery Sergeant 0231 Assistance Operations Chief, Chief Warrant Officer 3 2602 Systems Integration Officer, Sergeant 0231 Intelligence Analyst, Lance Corporal 0231 Intelligence Analyst (2), Sergeant 2651 Systems NCO, Gunnery Sergeant 2651 Special Technical Operations NCO, Chief Warrant Officer 4 0205 Intelligence Operations and Fusion Officer, and Staff Sergeant 0231 Intelligence Analyst.

It is important to note that MIGs have subordinate intelligence capacity, specifically, intelligence and radio battalions. Yet, the ability to leverage intelligence to support should be balanced with needs of the MAGTF elements to include the command element intelligence requirements.

Within the MIGs, the primary intelligence consumer is the information command center (ICC). At present, the relationship between the MIG S-2 and the ICC is not doctrinally defined or

understood, and it varies between the three MIGs. The ICC is composed of a watch floor and OIE cells that serve as the focal point for all ICC responsibilities and actions. These cells are organized to plan and coordinate information capabilities and activities in accordance with the seven OIE functions. The information warfare coordinator has overall responsibility for the function of the ICC and exercises control by providing guidance, direction, and tasking to the OIE functionally aligned cells. The MIG commander, through the ICC, is the MEF's lead for OIE with the ICC envisioned to be the MEF's central nervous system for sensing, understanding, and executing actions in the information environment. Therefore, the ICC provides the MEF commander with the means to command and control OIE as well as support operations in the physical domains.

In an attempt to identify capability gaps based on the MIG's current T/O and doctrinal construct, the Deputy Commandant for Information-Intelligence Department conducted a wargame (PERSISTENT WARRIOR 19.1)<sup>2</sup> with the primary objective of identifying MIG S-2 roles and responsibilities. A secondary objective was to capture tactics, techniques, and procedures differences across the three MIGs. Given the Marine Corps' focus on operations in the information environment for the MAGTF, the requirement to conceptualize how the MAGTF will operate and win in a contested information environment is imperative.

### PERSISTENT WARRIOR

PERSISTENT WARRIOR is a Title 10 wargame series intended to inform Service-level capability development efforts. The purpose of the wargame is twofold: to influence Operating Force non-materiel changes with regard to intelligence support (short-term) and inform concept and capability development for the Service and Supporting Establishment (mid- to long-term). Ultimately, the intent is to provide a venue that spurs innovation, tests and evaluates Marine Corps Information Environment Enterprise concepts, and identifies current and potential future capability gaps while

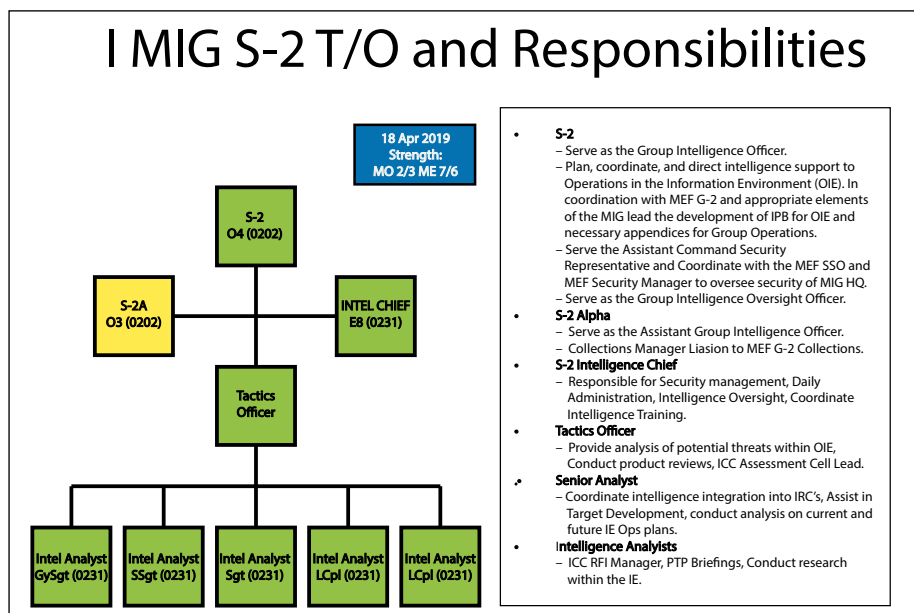


Figure 1. (Figure provided by author.)

proposing potential solutions. Broadly, recommendations might include changes to mission essential tasks, missions, concepts of operation, and concepts of employment refinement.

PERSISTENT WARRIOR 19.1 identified several key findings highlighting the differences between the three MIGs.<sup>3</sup> Since each MIG and their intelligence sections are in varying stages of manning, total force structure manpower was used as the baseline. In accordance with the Total Force Structure Management System, the MIG billet organization for the intelligence section is identified as: I/III MIG S-2: 0202 Major Intelligence Officer, 0202 Captain Intelligence Officer, 0231 Master Sergeant Intelligence Specialist; -II MIG S-2: 0202 Major Intelligence Officer, 0202 Captain Intelligence Officer, 0231 Master Sergeant Intelligence Specialist, and General Schedule-11 Assistant Security Manager. Each MIG functions uniquely to support their respective MEFs. For common reference, before conducting the vignette portion of the wargame, each MIG S-2 briefed their structure as well as their internal and external support requirements. The vignette portion of the wargame consisted of the following five focus areas:

- MIG S-2 staff support roles and responsibilities predominantly in a garrison environment.

- Intelligence support to the ICC in an offensive near-peer environment.
- Intelligence preparation of the battlespace considerations and defining responsibilities.
- Defining intelligence support to defensive cyber operations—internal defensive measures.
- Identifying training requirements for MIG intelligence Marines and OIE training.

I MIG took a doctrinal approach to intelligence operations. The MIG intelligence officer serves as the senior advisor to the MIG CO on intelligence issues. Additionally, the MIG intelligence officer provides overall guidance and direction for intelligence operations in the MIG. To better enable this, intelligence Marines in the MIG operations section executing intelligence functions were moved under the MIG intelligence officer, increasing the total number of personnel in the intelligence section from three to nine. This also helped to transition the intelligence section from an administrative to an operational staff section. (See Figure 1.)

I MEF views the MIG and G-3 Fires Effects Coordination Center (FECC) as intrinsically linked in the MEF targeting spectrum. The G-3 FECC is the primary lead for plans, developing the initial OIE planning supported by the MIG, OIE plans for the next phase, and

transition planning. The G-3 FECC and MIG transition plans in the future operations portion of the targeting spectrum. The MIG then owns the current operations fight, coordinating and executing the day's events to provide enhanced situational awareness and integrated assessment and tracking of ongoing operations. The MIG interacts closely through the MEF boards, bureaus, centers, cells, and working groups with the G-2 (Staff [G-2 operations, G2X, collections], operations control and analysis center [OCAC], intelligence operations center [IOC]), and the G-6 (MAGTF Communication Control Center). In this construct, the MEF G-2 owns the intelligence preparation of the battlefield (IPB) but receives inputs, as needed, and tailors support to the requirements of the MEF commanding general and the major subordinate commands and elements. To facilitate execution of the MIG/FECC relationship, the MIG ICC is linked to the FECC in the field. (See Figure 2.)

II MIG intelligence personnel are divided between the intelligence staff section and the ICC. The intelligence officer is tasked with administrative staff functions as well as collateral duties. The assistant intelligence officer is embedded in the ICC as the intelligence liaison officer in the ICC, coordinating intelligence support for the ICC. The intelligence chief is currently filling the senior enlisted advisor role within the ICC. This is not an optimal solution but was implemented because of manpower shortages and identified prioritized gaps within the MIG. II MEF views the MIG as a uniquely standalone element that alternatively supports and is supported by the G-2 (Staff [G-2 operations, G2X, collections], OCAC, IOC, MAGTF intelligence center), G-3 FECC, and G-6 MCCC. The MIG works through the B2C2WG to collaborate with the other MEF staff sections and provides information environment battlespace awareness and monitors the execution of OIE. In this construct, the II MIG CO owns the OIE IPB but works collaboratively with the MEF G-2 because of shared battlespace awareness responsibilities. Similar to I MIG, II MIG has the MIG

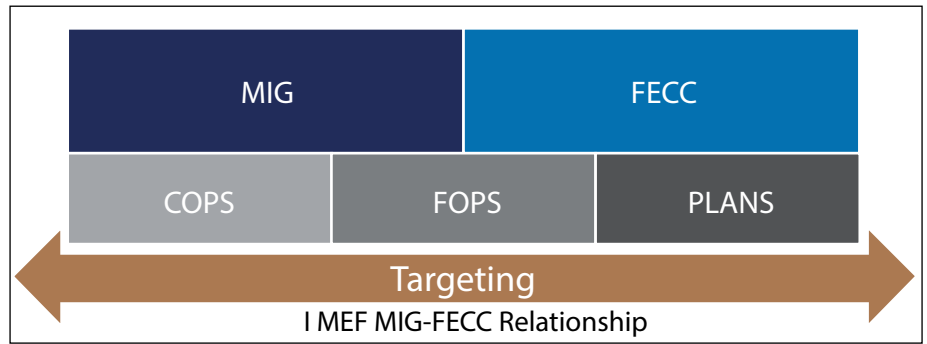


Figure 2. (Figure provided by author.)

ICC attached to the G-3 FECC in a deployed environment. (See Figure 3.)

III MIG modeled their approach after intelligence battalions that do not have intelligence sections in their staff. Additionally, III MIG CO is an intelligence officer and does not require an intelligence staff advisor. Currently, the intelligence officer is the only billet staffed in the III MIG intelligence section. The intelligence officer was moved from the intelligence section and is serving as the assistant operations officer with the long-term plan of transitioning the intelligence section billets into the MIG future operations section with the intelligence Marines providing detailed and long-term analysis needed to support OIE (e.g., target audience analysis, deception analysis, etc.) as well as produce and maintain the information environment baseline. Furthermore, III MIG views the MIG ICC as operationally controlling their subordinate battalions in the field. The MIG ICC is collocated with the OCAC

and IOC, providing guidance and direction. This deviates from established doctrine (*MCWP 2-10*)<sup>4</sup> that has the MEF G-2 providing guidance and direction to the OCAC and IOC. In this construct, the III MIG CO owns the OIE IPB. (See Figure 4.)

**Solutions**

As the Marine Corps reorganizes and modernizes, MIG's intelligence short-term and mid- to long-term shortfalls must be addressed through doctrine and policy, organization and personnel, training and education, and material. Understanding that the MIGs are not expected to be fully operational until 2025 and are still in the experimental stage, there are critical functions that require action now. Currently, each MIG is executing intelligence support uniquely based on available manpower, current established concepts, commander's guidance, and internal MEF command relationships. However, MIG ICC processes for intelligence support

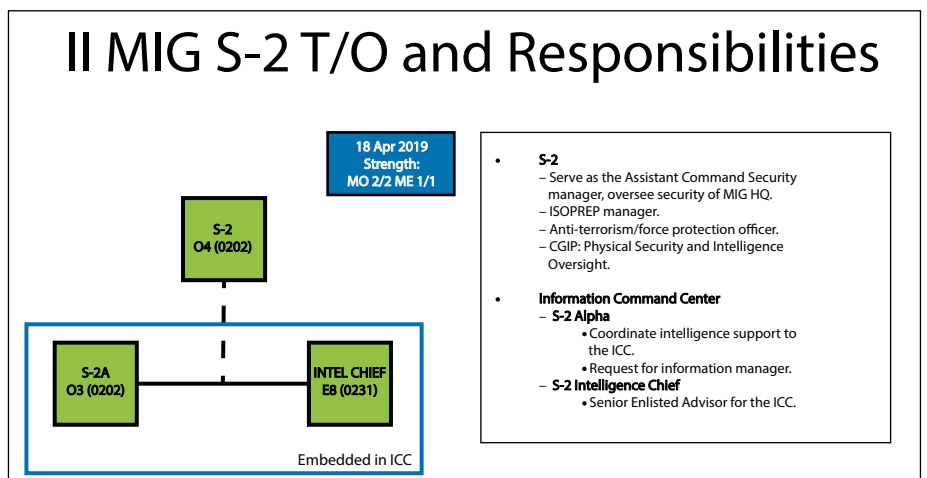


Figure 3. (Figure provided by author.)

to all information related capabilities must be defined and shared across the Marine Corps Information Environment Enterprise. Next, intelligence support to the MIG and OIE needs to be institutionalized. Finally, IPB should be resolved through consistent OIE intelligence support processes across the MEFs. Although IPB is a staff effort led by the AC/S G-2, the introduction of the MIGs has resulted in varied application of doctrine across the Operating Forces. For I MIG, the I MEF G-2 owns IPB and the MIG S-2 supports, as needed. For both the II and III MIG S-2, the MIG CO owns OIE IPB. However, with II MIG, there is overlap between the II MEF G-2 and II MIG CO on OIE responsibilities.

The Service must revisit key MIG billets and structure. Each MIG intelligence section has a standard T/O of three personnel (with II MIG having an additional civilian security manager). This T/O is insufficient to support the ICC and has resulted in each MIG modifying the existing structure to better support operational employment of intelligence personnel. While MIGs and ICCs are currently led and staffed largely by intelligence officers, this is not a requirement and may not reflect the command environment going forward. In the future, the MIG S2 may represent one of the few, or even the only, field grade 0202s within the MIG headquarters making intelligence staff section input on a variety of issues more prominent. Regardless of the CO's MOS, he should still rely on an intelligence staff officer for the overall management of the intelligence warfighting function. MIG intelligence sections need additional personnel to provide tailored production support to the ICC. Recent exercises have identified gaps in MIG S-2 structure (all-source analysis, geospatial and imagery intelligence, counter-intelligence, and human intelligence) to fully support intelligence analysis, production, and IRC planning in support of the ICC. Additionally, I and III MIG should be resourced with a civilian security manager for consistency and to allow MIG intelligence personnel to focus on intelligence operations.

## III MIG S-2 T/O and Responsibilities

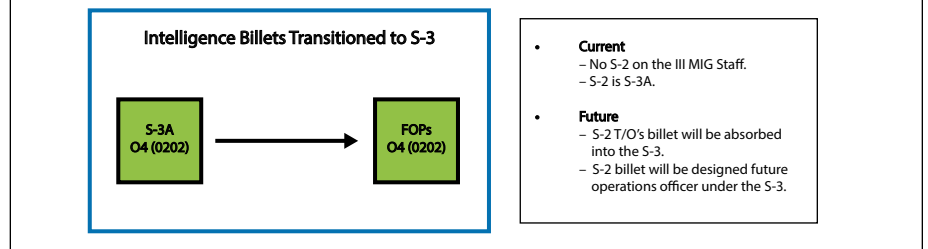


Figure 4. (Figure provided by author.)

Training and education solutions need to be prioritized and institutionalized across the Service. Intelligence Marines need OIE training prior to arriving at the MIG. Intelligence personnel assigned to MIGs should attend Intermediate MAGTF Information Officer Practitioners Course and be trained to the requirements for Information Operations Specialist (0551) or Basic Information Operations Staff Officer (0510). In order to fully support the ICC, intelligence Marines must have a fundamental understanding of all IRCs. More importantly, there is no training focused specifically on intelligence support to OIE. Ultimately, with this much focus on training, the Service needs an OIE center of excellence. Much like aviation has MAWTS and the GCE has MCTOG, an OIE center of excellence would host the Marine Corps' subject-matter experts who provide advanced specialized individual and collective staff training for OIE support to MAGTFs, lead doctrine and training standard development and refinement, and examine emerging concepts, technology, tactics, techniques, and procedures to enhance operational readiness of the MIGs and their supported MAGTFs. Finally, unit training and large-scale exercises should include OIE considerations and scenarios to train the force to operate in the IE. Both real-world OIE events and exercise OIE injects help sharpen the force and define roles, responsibilities, and command and control relationships for the G-2, G-3 FECC, G-6 MAGTF Communication Control Center, MIG S-2, and the ICC.

### Conclusion

The Marine Corps is adapting to the rapidly evolving information environment by developing new capabilities. A key formation within these capabilities is the MIG, which enables the MAGTF to integrate information to enhance its lethality and survivability. Current efforts to reorganize and modernize the MIG have potential to enhance MAGTF decision making if efforts are undertaken to address issues highlighted in both PERSISTENT WARRIOR 19.1 and recent exercises. Revisiting MIG intelligence concept of support, organizational structure, and training and educational prioritization addresses not only short-term issues but also sets the stage for long-term institutional solutions.

### Notes

1. Marine Air Ground Task Force, Information Environment Operations, *Concept of Employment*, (Quantico, VA: July 2017).
2. Deputy Commandant for Information, "Message DTG: 081750Z March 19, Intelligence Department PERSISTENT WARRIOR 19.1 Wargame Announcement," (Washington, DC: March 2019).
3. Deputy Commandant for Information, Intelligence Division, "PERSISTENT WARRIOR 19.1 MEF Information Group (MIG) S-2 Roles & Responsibilities Exercise Report," (Washington, DC: April 2019).
4. Headquarters Marine Corps, *MCWP 2-1, Intelligence Operations*, (Washington, DC: 2003).

