



INFORMATION-RELATED CAPABILITIES: PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Last Reviewed: 28 April 2016

[Public affairs](#) (PA) provides [information operations](#) (IO) with an open and credible means to reach key public audiences. PA consists of public information, command information, and civic engagement activities that are directed toward both the external and internal publics with interest in the DOD.¹ The external public may include allied, neutral, and adversary audiences. Truth is foundational to the credibility of all public affairs operations. [Timely and agile dissemination](#) is essential to help achieve desired information effects. PA plays a significant role throughout the [range of military operations](#), with PA being one of the most prominent [information-related capabilities](#) (IRCs) used prior to the outset of hostilities and during stability operations. While PA cannot provide false or misleading information, it must be aware of the intent of other IRCs such as [military deception](#), [military information support operations](#) (MISO) and [operations security](#) to lessen the chance of compromise. PA integration with other IRCs is vital to ensure the capabilities complement rather than conflict with each other.

Rather than providing an advantage to an adversary, the carefully coordinated release of operational information in some situations can intimidate an adversary, deter conflict, and counter adversary propaganda while also maintaining or building support for military operations.

Counterpropaganda

Counterpropaganda operations involve those efforts to negate, neutralize, diminish the effects of, or gain an advantage from adversary propaganda efforts.² Counterpropaganda operations are normally handled through PA channels; however, several other IRCs can support that activity. In addition to PA activities to refute adversary propaganda, there may be [electronic warfare](#) or [cyberspace operations](#) denying adversary use of propaganda outlets. MISO contributes to counterpropaganda missions by amplifying key themes and messages among specific foreign audiences, some of which may be inaccessible by PA operations. Timing and initiative in the information environment is vital to defeating propaganda, particularly when addressing incidents involving collateral damage or friendly force mistakes. Rapidly providing

¹ JP 3-61, [Public Affairs](#).

² Annex 3-61, [Public Affairs Operations](#).

accurate, available information to the public may help disarm adversary attempts to exploit friendly actions for their propaganda value. MISO planners may also assist PA with conducting propaganda analysis.

Combat Camera (COMCAM)

COMCAM is a specialized directed imagery capability in support of strategic, operational, and planning requirements during wartime operations, worldwide crisis, contingencies, joint exercises, humanitarian operations, and other events of significant national interest involving the DOD. COMCAM acquires, processes, and distributes classified and unclassified still and motion imagery. PA typically has oversight responsibility for COMCAM activities, although COMCAM may support other IRC operations. COMCAM teams are uniquely organized, trained (including fully certified/qualified aircrew members) and equipped for rapid global response to provide documentation of air and ground operations and provide visual products for use by IRCs. Commanders use these products for [communication needs](#), [operational planning](#), decision making, [operational assessment](#), and to satisfy requirements for historical documentation of operations. Where rapid global response, aerial imagery, special forces operations, or combat maneuver and capability are not required, traditional visual information resources, not COMCAM, should be used.

See Annex 3-61, [Public Affairs Operations](#), for more information on PA, Counterpropaganda, or COMCAM.
