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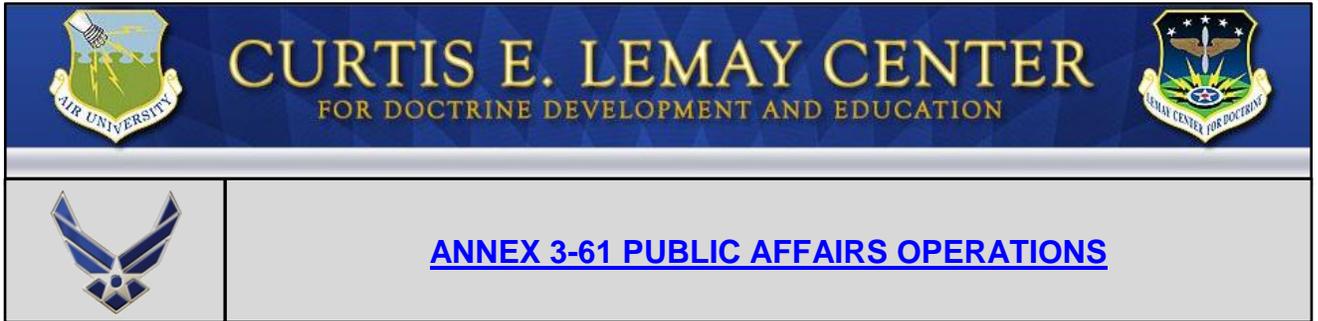


## ANNEX 3-61 PUBLIC AFFAIRS OPERATIONS

### INTRODUCTION TO PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Last Updated: 19 June 2014

Public Affairs (PA) is defined as “Those public information, command information, and community engagement activities directed toward both the external and internal publics with interest in the Department of Defense” (Joint Publication [JP] 3-61, Public Affairs). **The Air Force conducts PA operations to communicate timely, truthful, and useful information about Air Force activities to Air Force, domestic, and international audiences.** PA operations assist commanders to achieve effects such as deterring conflict; fostering public trust and support for operations; countering adversary propaganda or misinformation that may affect unit morale or readiness; restoring peace; or waging war. By disseminating information concerning air, space, and cyberspace capabilities, preparations, and results, PA operations enhance Airman morale and readiness to accomplish the mission, gain and maintain public support for military operations, and communicate United States resolve in a manner that provides global influence and deterrence. **Truth is the foundation of all public affairs operations,** both in terms of credibility and capability. Timely and agile dissemination is essential to help achieve desired information effects.



## COMMANDER'S RESPONSIBILITY

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[Public affairs](#) (PA) operations are a commander's responsibility and are associated with and create [asymmetric](#) effects. Even those PA operations conducted at the [operational](#) and [tactical levels](#) may generate strategic [effects](#). Commanders are ultimately responsible for successful integration of PA capabilities into operations. Commanders require a clear understanding of PA's role in operations to help achieve their desired effects.

PA personnel should maintain awareness of, and advise the commander and planners regarding, public opinion and political, social, and cultural shifts affecting operations. **Public affairs operations give commanders awareness of the international public information environment and the means to use information to take offensive and preemptive defensive actions as part of Air Force operations.** Commanders face the challenge of balancing the task of informing the public with the need to maintain [operational security](#), a traditional cornerstone of successful military planning and execution. PA operations are an important military capability of [information operations](#), providing public information to defend against adversary [propaganda](#) and misinformation directed at domestic and international audiences. **PA operations are a force multiplier by analyzing and influencing the information environment's effect on military operations** and delivering increased battlespace awareness to the commander through analysis of the information environment. PA capabilities are most effective when planned and executed as an integral part of an overall operation.

PA operations deliver open and honest two-way communication within the Air Force and to the public. Commanders instill trust and enhance morale by personally communicating within their commands. As spokespersons for the Air Force, the Department of Defense (DOD), and the US Government, commanders and their representatives play a vital role in building public support for military operations and communicating US resolve to international audiences.

Providing the maximum disclosure of timely and accurate information as rapidly as possible enables the commander to seize the information initiative. **Involved and sustained public engagement establishes Air Force information dominance, making the Air Force a preferred source of information to internal and external audiences.**



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## [ANNEX 3-61 PUBLIC AFFAIRS OPERATIONS](#)

### **[DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE GUIDANCE ON PUBLIC AFFAIRS](#)**

Last Reviewed: 19 June 2014

It is Department of Defense (DOD) policy to make available timely and accurate information so the public, the Congress, and the news media may assess and understand the facts about national security and defense strategy. DOD Directive (DODD) 5122.05, Enclosure 2, [Principles of Information](#), delineates principles of information that apply in supporting the DOD policy. Refer to Annex 3-61: [Appendix A](#) for the complete listing of those principles.



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## ANNEX 3-61 PUBLIC AFFAIRS OPERATIONS

### **PA RELATIONSHIP TO COMMUNICATION SYNCHRONIZATION**

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The Air Force supports Department of Defense (DOD) efforts to synchronize, align, and coordinate communication activities to facilitate an understanding of how the planning and execution of DOD strategies, plans, operations, and activities will be received or understood by key audiences. Inconsistencies between what US forces say and do can reduce DOD credibility and negatively affect current and future missions.

Communication synchronization entails focused efforts to create, strengthen, or preserve conditions favorable for the advancement of national interests, policies, and objectives. Within DOD, [joint force commanders](#) (JFCs) implement higher-level communication guidance through the commander's communication synchronization process. JFCs provide guidance and their staffs develop the approach for achieving information-related objectives and ensuring the integrity and consistency of themes, messages, images, and actions to the lowest level through the integration and synchronization of relevant information-related capabilities. (JP 1, *Doctrine for the Armed Forces of the United States.*)

As the Air Force's primary conduit for public information, [public affairs](#) (PA) plays a key role in the communication synchronization process. It counsels leadership on how audiences may perceive military actions, as well as how the information environment may affect operations. PA may create, strengthen, or preserve conditions favorable to accomplishing desired objectives by providing the public timely, factual, and accurate information. PA also analyzes and assesses communication effects and their progress toward mission accomplishment. This assists commanders with decision making and adjusting their communication strategy when necessary.

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## ANNEX 3-61 PUBLIC AFFAIRS OPERATIONS

### PA RELATIONSHIP TO INFORMATION OPERATIONS

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Public affairs (PA) operations are an integral military capability of both informational flexible deterrent options and [information operations](#). A flexible deterrent option (FDO) is “a planning construct intended to facilitate early decision making by developing a wide range of interrelated responses that begin with deterrent-oriented actions carefully tailored to produce a desired effect” (JP 5-0, [Joint Operation Planning](#)). The FDO is the means by which the various diplomatic, information, military, and economic deterrent options available to the President are included in the [joint operation planning process](#). Information operations are “the integrated employment during military operations of [information-related capabilities](#) (IRCs) in concert with other lines of operation to influence, disrupt, corrupt, or usurp the decision making of adversaries and potential adversaries while protecting our own” (Annex 3-13, [Information Operations](#)). IO does not “own” individual capabilities but rather employs IRCs in an integrated manner to create a desired effect—to affect adversary, neutral, and friendly decision-making—contributing toward a specified end-state. PA plays a significant role throughout the [range of military options](#), with PA being one of the most prominent 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](#), and [operations security](#) to lessen the chance of compromise. PA integration with other IRCs through IO is vital to ensure the capabilities complement rather than conflict with each other.



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## ANNEX 3-61 PUBLIC AFFAIRS OPERATIONS

### PA RELATIONSHIP TO BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS

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Building Partnerships (BP) is interacting through words and deeds with domestic partners, foreign governments, militaries, and populations in order to build trust-based relationships for mutual benefit. An important aspect of BP is the ability to influence the perceptions, will, and behavior of competitors and adversaries so they act in a manner more favorable to US and partner nation interests.

BP has two principal missions: Shape and Communicate.

- ★ **Shape** refers to conducting activities to affect the perceptions, will, behavior, and capabilities of partner, competitor, or adversary leaders, military forces, and relevant populations to further US national security or shared global security interests.
- ★ **Communicate** refers to developing and presenting information to accomplish the same.

Public affairs supports BP by making foreign audiences aware of US capabilities and resolve while also building and sustaining domestic public trust and support of Air Force contributions to national security.

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## ANNEX 3-61 PUBLIC AFFAIRS OPERATIONS

### PA RELATIONSHIP TO EFFECTS-BASED OPERATIONS

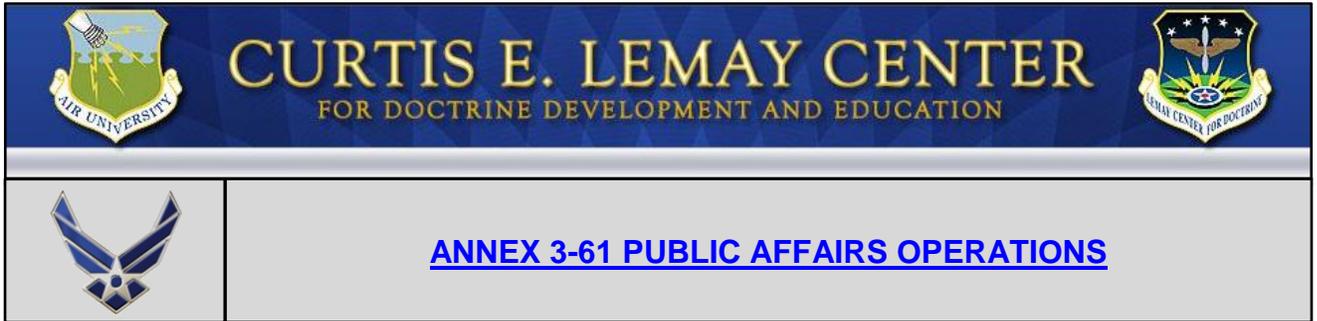
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Last Updated: 19 June 2014

The [effects-based approach to operations](#) (EBAO) is “an approach in which operations are planned, executed, assessed, and adapted to influence or change systems or capabilities in order to achieve desired outcomes” (Annex 3-0, [Operations and Planning](#)). The basic methodology of EBAO encompasses objectives, effects, and actions. Objectives are clearly defined, decisive, attainable, and measurable goals toward which every military operation should be directed. Effects are the full range of outcomes, events, or consequences that result from a particular action or set of actions. Actions are individual deeds or acts of will that can be either kinetic (physical, material) or non-kinetic (logical, behavioral).

Properly [planned](#), [executed](#), and [assessed](#), [public affairs](#) (PA) operations are fundamentally effects-based operations in terms of creating an “effect” by disseminating timely, truthful, and accurate information to achieve a particular objective. However, the success of PA operations is contingent upon the desired effects of PA operations being related to appropriate objectives.

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## INFORMATION ENVIRONMENT

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As used in this document, the [information environment](#) (IE) is defined as “the aggregate of individuals, organizations, and systems that collect, process, disseminate, or act on information.” The collection, processing, and distribution of information in the IE may directly affect military operations. The public information environment is a substantial subsystem of the IE that includes “all individuals, organizations, or systems that collect, process, and disseminate information for public consumption.” The public information environment is comprised of many subsystems ranging from interpersonal communication to international public information, mass media, social media, and the internet.

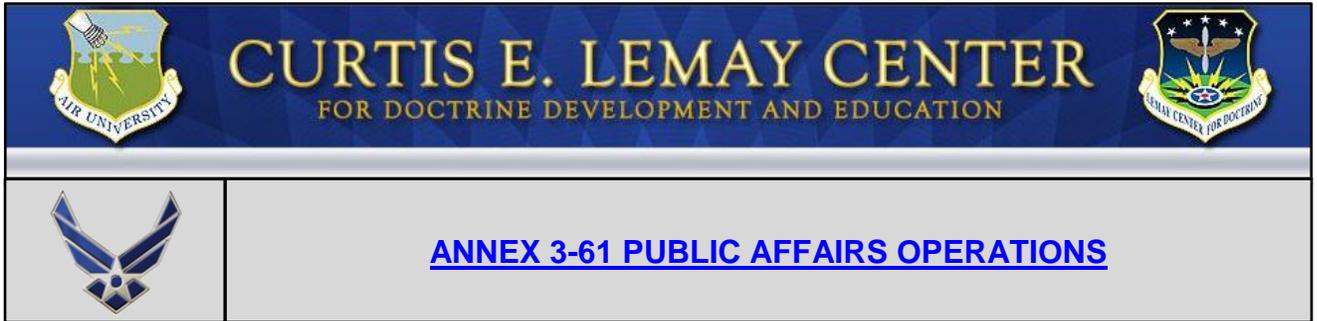
The public media and international organizations are a part of the dynamic IE. Although they are not part of the US government or the armed Services, these public information elements can nevertheless directly affect the success or failure of military operations.

Global communication capabilities make news and information simultaneously available from the strategic to the tactical levels of military operations. Communication technologies and the expansion of international media alliances have affected the conduct of military operations in a degree unprecedented to operations before Operation DESERT STORM. In addition, commanders and [public affairs](#) (PA) operators can expect information released for an internal audience to cross-flow into the external media environment and act as a force multiplier for delivering information directly to the public via worldwide web sites, social media, or other means.

Audiences perceive information through the prism of their own national, cultural, political, and regional perspectives. This can substantially alter the reception of the message, especially when the information is of interest to populations of foreign countries.

The modern information environment is characterized by 24-hour media reporting and real-time analysis of events, allowing audiences in the US and throughout the world to receive real-time information from national leaders and from the theater of operations. Add in the proliferation of new media and social media usage and the result is an environment where decision makers may be influenced by an overwhelming amount of information - accurate or inaccurate. The resulting effect may be political pressure on national leaders and military commanders to change strategic goals, policy, guidance, objectives, and procedures that affect military operations.





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## MEDIA ENVIRONMENT

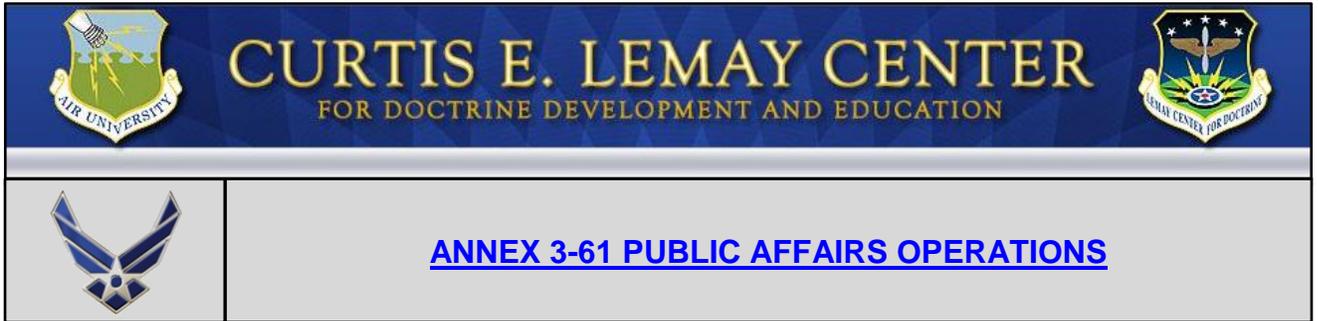
Last Updated: 19 June 2014

Mass media outlets are key actors in the [information environment](#) (IE). Their role has significant implications for modern warfare. Through technology and a complex web of formal and informal support and integration relationships, today's mass media outlets possess global reach with capabilities and tactics that mirror those of the modern US military. Most major national and international media outlets actively gather, synthesize, and distribute news and information around the clock at a very high tempo. Though all media outlets have their own editorial policy and define and cover news differently, most major national and international outlets focus heavily on military operations during times of international crisis and war. The operational reality for the US military is that the media are, and will continue to be, key actors during crises and conflicts.

Most media outlets cover military operations from multiple perspectives. They simultaneously pursue stories on all aspects of warfare—strategic, operational, tactical, diplomatic, economic, and human interest. They leverage technology and a complex network of reporters and sources to provide audiences insight into as many dimensions of the news as possible. As with military operations, senior editors and producers at these outlets make important strategic decisions at a rapid pace, often with less than perfect situational awareness. In this modern, highly competitive industry, media places tremendous emphasis on seizing the initiative, and then providing agile, timely responses to world events.

The evolution of the global and public information environments increased the demand for information and the competition to discover and report unique stories. The 24-hour news cycle results in more analysis and editorial commentary that may or may not present an accurate account of military operations. Additionally, news media and social media can drive mass media coverage of events that might not otherwise garner traditional media attention. Modern military operations are widely viewed events where at least one side's actions are watched in real time by the global audience. Worldwide audiences, including US deployed forces and their adversaries, can receive a wide range of information from a growing number of sources. This information may be of dubious or unknown quality and could be part of an adversary's [propaganda](#) or misinformation campaign. The tremendous growth of internet use and its ubiquitous global access make it a popular medium to deliver such information.

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## SOCIETY'S RELIANCE ON INFORMATION

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Society's demonstrated reliance on and demand for current information concerning world events present commanders with a valuable opportunity to employ [public affairs](#) (PA) operations. **Timely, accurate, and useful information provided during peacetime builds credibility with news media representatives and the public, translating into relationships vital to the warfighter.**

The relationship built between the military and the public in peacetime is vital to mission success in wartime or during [contingencies](#) since information coming from US/[coalition](#) forces will have a greater likelihood of being accepted as credible, truthful, and useful than would the adversary's information. The truth-based relationship strengthens PA operational capabilities to counter adversary [propaganda](#) and misinformation, to leverage credibility to shape global influence and deterrence, to build public trust and support, and to enhance Airman morale and readiness.

Although United States adversaries have used and misled domestic and international media to communicate propaganda during many conflicts, PA operations conducted by the US are truth-based and will not intentionally mislead the US Congress, public, or media.

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## ANNEX 3-61 PUBLIC AFFAIRS OPERATIONS

### PA PRINCIPLES

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The purpose of Air Force [public affairs](#) (PA) operations is to communicate timely, accurate, and useful information about Air Force activities to Department of Defense (DOD), Air Force, domestic, and international audiences. PA operators enhance their ability to meet commanders' information requirements by adhering to the following principles of public information:

- ★ Tell the truth.
- ★ Deliver time-critical information in time.
- ★ Engage the media.
- ★ Practice security at the source.
- ★ Coordinate and be consistent.
- ★ Strive for accuracy.
- ★ Be relevant.
- ★ Integrate with other operations.
- ★ Seek fusion of information.
- ★ Ensure [unity of effort](#).
- ★ Be survivable, sustainable, and deployable.

#### **Tell the truth**

Truth is the foundation of all public affairs operations. Truth enables credibility; credibility allows US military personnel to be believed or heard over an adversary or competing message.

Commanders should use PA operations to provide accurate and useful information to the public in a timely manner. The long-term success of Air Force operations depends

on maintaining the integrity and credibility of officially released information. Lying or attempting to deceive the public will destroy trust and support for the Air Force and PA operations.

### **Deliver time-critical information in time**

Commanders should be prepared to release timely, coordinated, and approved information about military operations. Commanders should know the guidance for media engagement prior to initiating operations. Establishing media guidance requires aggressive coordination through the [chain of command](#), and establishing the guidance prior to initiating operations will enable the commander to provide time-critical information. Difficult issues and events that are potentially unfavorable to the Air Force should be addressed openly, honestly, and as soon as possible; maximum disclosure permissible with minimum delay.

*A B-1 Lancer flying an Operation ENDURING FREEDOM mission crashed into the Indian Ocean the night of December 12, 2001. Shortly afterward, Defense Department spokeswoman Victoria Clark addressed reporters at a Pentagon press conference explaining the situation and that all four crewmembers had been rescued. Media access to the crew was granted very quickly, including video of the Airmen aboard the Navy ship involved in the rescue. The very next day, because the military was proactively addressing the press with information, it became a non-story. When Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen Richard Myers held their regularly scheduled press conference, only one question was asked about the cause of the B-1 crash.*

**—Pentagon News Service Report, 2002**

Information should be released quickly, even though it may be uncomplimentary for the Air Force. Attempting to deny unfavorable information or failing to acknowledge its existence leads to media speculation, creates the perception of a cover-up, and results in lost public trust in the Air Force while degrading the effects of other capabilities of PA operations. The delay in addressing unfavorable issues also provides adversaries with an uncontested opportunity to dominate the public [information environment](#), twisting the facts to support their claims.

### **Engage the media**

Reporters covering operations should be given access to units and [Airmen](#) and, whenever feasible, be included in the operation at the unit level. Integrating journalists into units gives the media a unique perspective, a chance to know the Airmen, and an opportunity to understand and experience the Air Force. The increased access and insight allow a reporter to more thoroughly and accurately tell the Air Force story, strengthening our global influence and deterrence, building public trust and support, and enhancing Airman morale.

Differences in philosophies, values, and perspectives may lead to misunderstandings between military professionals and the media. The media will be a constant factor in any military operation, and rather than considering the media as an adversary, commanders and planners need to actively engage them whenever practicable.

Providing accurate and timely information to the media educates the media about military operations, creates a bond of trust between the media and the military, and results in more accurate reporting. DODD 5122.05, Enclosure 3, [Statement of DOD Principles for News Media Coverage of DOD Operations](#), provides guidance for commanders and PA to facilitate media engagement. Refer to [Appendix B](#) for additional information.

All Airmen should be trained to have a basic ability to engage members of the news media with general Air Force and individual professional information. They may become spokespersons for the Service and, in some cases, may be considered by the media to be more credible sources than commanders or senior officials. By projecting confidence and commitment during interviews, or while talking to family and friends, Airmen help to promote public support for military operations, enhance Airman morale, and strengthen global influence and deterrence efforts. Telling the Air Force story contributes to mission accomplishment, can communicate restraint, indicates resolve, and serves as a deterrent.

Commanders and planners can promote more accurate reporting by educating the media on military activities to help overcome communication difficulties and improve the media's understanding of the military. Similar efforts should be directed towards civic leaders and domestic / international audiences to enhance their understanding of military operations, help generate public understanding and support at home and abroad for military operations, and help shape the information environment.

### **Practice security at the source**

All Air Force personnel—military and civilian—are responsible for safeguarding sensitive information. As a source of information, every person should be aware of [operations security](#) (OPSEC) issues, whether being interviewed by a reporter or sharing information with a spouse or a friend or on social media. The speed at which information passes through the [information environment](#) (IE) makes attempts to censor military operations impractical, if not impossible. As a result, Airmen should understand what information is approved or not approved for release. Commanders and PA personnel must actively engage Airmen, making them aware of the necessity to safeguard information and communicate responsibly.

PA personnel should work closely with OPSEC program managers to ensure PA products are as thorough as possible without endangering OPSEC. Commanders should ensure security reviews are performed and release authority is granted at the lowest possible level to ensure the effectiveness of their PA operations. Unnecessarily lengthy security reviews of operational information may degrade operational effectiveness. The tone and message will be set by the first to enter the public information environment. The timely release of information is a force multiplier, while delays limit the effectiveness of PA operations and increase the opportunity for adversaries to get their story out first.

## Coordinate and be consistent

Commanders should strive for the release of coordinated and consistent information at all levels of command. The IE provides the public with information about military operations from a variety of military units. Sources in theater and at the Pentagon are often quoted in the same media reports. Conflicting statements or inconsistent information can cause skepticism, undermine public trust and support, damage Airmen's morale, and degrade the strength of global influence and [deterrence](#) efforts. Commanders should ensure the Air Force puts forth a consistent message through its many Airman "voices." Information should be appropriately coordinated and in compliance with official DOD, supported command, Service, and major command guidance before it is released to the public. Commanders should ensure PA operations are coordinated, integrated, and deconflicted with air, space, cyberspace, and information operations. [Military information support operations](#) (MISO) information and the information prepared for public release should be coordinated and deconflicted to ensure the messages to the respective audiences are not contradictory.

## Strive for accuracy

*In April 1999 Operation ALLIED FORCE F-16s mistakenly struck two civilian convoys in Kosovo. For almost a week, conflicting information came from NATO, EUCOM, and Washington. Images of the scene led evening newscasts. After a week of conflicting stories and negative media headlines, NATO approved the Aviano AB commander to brief the "ground truth" to the international media. His highly detailed explanation set the issue to rest that day. However, some officials came to believe that NATO's slow response to the incident could have cost NATO its credibility. Had NATO been given accurate information to immediately release – putting the incident into the proper context for the world audience – the Serbs would have been denied the enormous propaganda value the incident and its initial handling gave them.*

**—Opportunity Lost: Public Affairs, Information Operations, and the Air War against Serbia  
Aerospace Power Journal, Summer 2000**

One of the most demanding tasks for PA professionals during operations is the need to balance expediency with requirements for accuracy. At times it may be necessary to release as much accurate information as is available and provide updates as more information is obtained. Accuracy of all the information must always be the higher priority, but it should not unnecessarily delay release of accurate information available at the time.

Every member of the Air Force can help provide accurate information to the public about the Air Force and its operations. Commanders should educate and encourage

their military and civilian personnel to tell the Air Force story by providing them with timely, accurate information appropriate for public release.

### **Be relevant**

PA operations must be well-planned, executed, and assessed. This is necessary to ensure PA operations are relevant to commanders, the operations are fully integrated, and the operations meet desired objectives. PA products and resources must be developed and focused to achieve and complement the commander's intent and operational objectives. Likewise, these products and resources must be continually assessed to ensure they adequately address public interest.

### **Integrate with other operations**

PA operations are most effective when their capabilities are integrated into strategic, operational, and tactical plans and employed by commanders at all levels to achieve desired effects. Failure to integrate PA operations in the [strategy development](#) and [planning phases](#) can result in a reduced ability to affect the public information environment and increased likelihood of conflicting with other objectives.

It is vital to overall operational success that PA is a part of the strategy development and planning phases. Similarly, as an essential element of operations, PA must be fully aware of operations goals and objectives and be fully integrated at all levels.

### **Seek fusion of information**

Information from many sources is combined, evaluated, and analyzed to produce predictive awareness of the public information environment and identify PA opportunities. This process is called fusion. Fusion helps defeat adversary [propaganda](#) and misinformation efforts by providing PA operators with information from multiple sources, building a more complete picture of the public and IE. Care must be taken not to promote fusion at the expense of timeliness: significant information that accurately tells a part of the story should be released as soon as possible to help gain information dominance for the Air Force.

### **Ensure unity of effort**

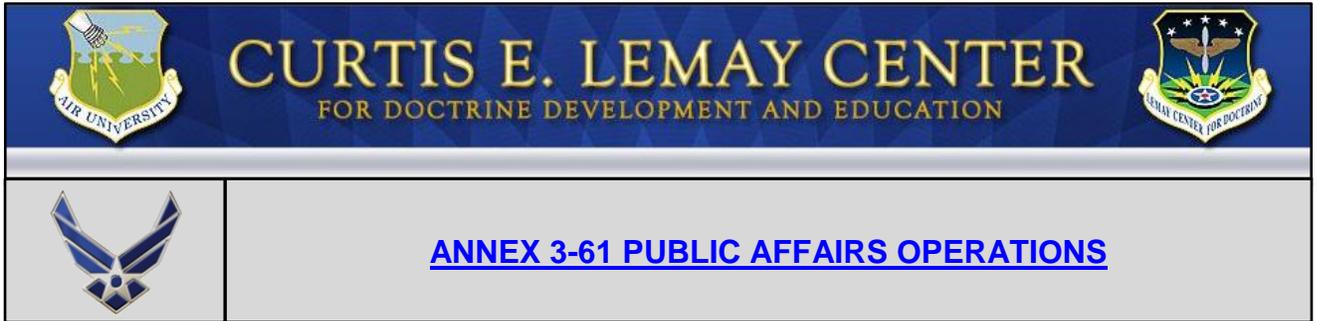
PA organizations at all levels should have clearly defined relationships that minimize duplication, enhance sharing of information throughout the public affairs structure, and are mutually supportive. PA at all levels must speak with one voice to address common issues. As part of unity of effort, PA operators must maintain a close relationship within the operations and support communities and other government agencies engaging in the public information environment.

### **Be survivable, sustainable, and deployable**

PA resources and operations must be survivable to ensure their capabilities are available when needed. Important components of survivability include redundancy of critical information and protection against adversarial information operations and misinformation attempts. PA systems and equipment must be built to be easily deployable. Deployable resources should be easy to transport and set up, and be

capable of immediate connectivity into the host-unit communications architecture. Finally they must be easily sustainable by the host-unit communications personnel. This entails ensuring they can operate regardless of whether it is at an austere location with minimum support or an established location with robust support availability.

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## PA COMPETENCIES

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[Public affairs](#) (PA) operations deliver four capabilities to commanders. The following are the core competencies of PA operations:

- ✦ Providing trusted counsel to leaders.
- ✦ Building and sustaining public trust and support.
- ✦ Enhancing [Airman](#) morale and readiness.
- ✦ Supporting global influence and [deterrence](#).

These synergistic competencies are core contributions of PA operations to the Air Force and are conducted across the [range of military operations](#). PA operations are most effective when they are integrated into strategic, operational, and tactical plans and executed with direct support from commanders at all levels to achieve desired effects.

### Trusted counsel to leaders

PA operations provide commanders and other Air Force leaders candid, timely, and accurate counsel and guidance concerning the effects of the public information environment on the Air Force's ability to meet operational objectives. This PA competency includes providing predictive awareness of the global public [information environment](#) through the observation, analysis, and interpretation of domestic and foreign media reporting, public opinion trends, lessons learned from the past, and preparing leaders to engage the media. This counsel helps commanders make well-informed decisions regarding the public information environment's effect on operations and forecast possible results. PA support to commanders is integral to operational success as media and public interest increase during operations and can affect the outcome.

### Public trust and support

PA operations support a strong national defense—preparing the nation for conflict and war—by building and sustaining public trust and understanding of Air Force contributions to national security. These operations make Americans aware of the value of spending tax dollars on readiness, advanced weapons, training, personnel, and the associated costs of maintaining a premier air, space, and cyberspace force. With

public support, Air Force leaders are able to successfully recruit, train, and equip Airmen to meet Air Force operational requirements.

*The reason the Pentagon pushed for embedding on such a large scale in Iraq was to counter the level of disinformation and misinformation that the Iraqi regime was famous for producing. They (Iraqis) have a long history of misinformation, and senior leaders knew we needed to have a first-hand, unbiased set of eyes to see what was happening on the battlefield to counter the Iraqi regime and dominate the information market with factual information.*

—Pentagon project officer, 2004

PA operations give commanders the means to gain and maintain support for the Air Force among diverse public audiences. These operations strengthen the bonds between the Air Force and the public through open, honest dialogue. Data and imagery, continuously available in near-real time in the [information environment](#) (IE), can have an immediate effect on public support. Likewise, distorted information and imagery distributed by an adversary can have an adverse effect on national will and the support of Air Force operations. PA capabilities, integrated with other operational capabilities and employed effectively, can ensure the Air Force story is told while also preempting and degrading an enemy's effectiveness in misleading the public.

To fight and win in the information age, commanders should employ public affairs communications that foster ongoing public understanding and support of operational requirements. Commanders also can leverage public affairs capabilities like bands, imagery, social media, and other products that can transcend traditional media and audience boundaries. Use of the full range of capabilities expands the reach of PA operations messages to garner public trust and support for Air Force operations.

### **Airman morale and readiness**

Airman morale and readiness directly translate into combat capability for the Air Force. PA operations enable Airmen to understand their roles in the mission, explaining how policies, programs, and operations affect them and their families.

PA operations convey truthful, credible, and useful information to achieve Airman morale and readiness, and provide Air Force capability to counter misinformation and [propaganda](#) directed at our forces. PA tools such as articles, commanders' calls, band performances, and social media are some of the components of this PA competency. PA operations counter adversary propaganda efforts and help to minimize the loneliness, confusion, boredom, uncertainty, fear, rumors, and other factors that cause stress and undermine efficient operations.

PA operations also contribute to readiness by helping to increase Airmen's understanding of the [law of armed conflict](#) (LOAC), [rules of engagement](#) (ROE) and respect for the protections provided to noncombatants and detainees through the presentation of such information in radio or TV broadcasts, base newspapers, base bulletins, base websites, etc.

*Broadcast operations during contingencies are often the local commander's best internal information tool. In Operation IRAQI FREEDOM the insurgents were deploying a new type of improvised explosive device (IED). These new IEDs were being disguised in a completely new way and had proven to be effective and deadly. Command came to the broadcasters to help get the word to the troops as quickly as possible. American Forces Network-Iraq immediately wrote and broadcast a series of IED spots to make the coalition troops aware of the new threat. The spots played throughout Iraq and were credited in getting the troops smart on the new IEDs.*

—Director, AFN Iraq, 2004

Informed and knowledgeable Airmen have higher morale and can be relied upon to effectively deliver Air Force themes and messages as they explain their mission to media representatives, public groups, or individuals. With Airmen as credible, reliable spokespeople, PA operations can more effectively deliver global influence, deterrence, enhanced public trust and support as Airmen convey Air Force themes and messages in the public information environment.

### **Global influence and deterrence**

**PA contributes to global influence and deterrence by making foreign leaders and audiences aware of US capabilities and resolve.** Commanders should employ PA operations to develop and implement communication strategies to inform national and international audiences about how airpower affects global events. Building the awareness of national and international audiences about US resolve to employ its strength can enhance support from friendly countries. The same information may deter potential adversaries, driving a crisis back to peace before the use of kinetic force becomes necessary.

Information and power projection demonstrating US or friendly force capabilities and resolve to adversary and international public audiences can be effective in causing adversary decision makers to seek other options short of conflict when they may otherwise not be deterred from conflict. In addition to integrating PA operations during the strategy development and planning phases of an operation, commanders strengthen the effectiveness of PA capabilities when PA operations at all levels are unified with a common message and theme. Exclusion of PA in the early stages of strategy and operational planning limits the effectiveness of PA operations to seize the

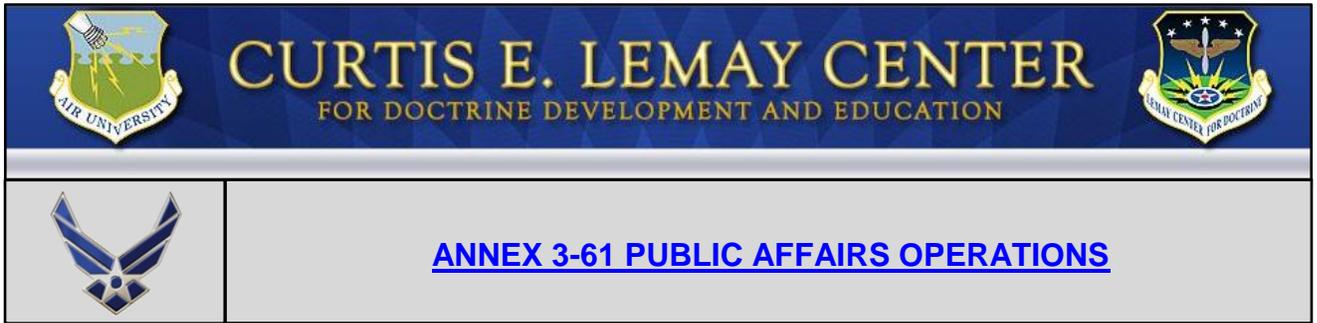
information initiative from the beginning of an operation and consequently degrades the commander's ability to gain information superiority.

*Every Airman, regardless of specialty, must understand and be able to explain how they contribute to producing unparalleled airpower for our Nation. Each Airman has a compelling story that needs to be told. Tell your story. Let your fellow Americans know that their Air Force provides Global Vigilance, Global Reach, and Global Power to defend our great nation. Airmen should be proud of who they are, what they do, and how well they accomplish the mission.*

**— Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. Mark Welsh, 2013**

PA operations should be planned for and integrated at multiple levels for employment of offensive PA strategies to help ensure operational success. PA operations also can employ defensive strategies to preempt adversary propaganda and misinformation attempts that otherwise could weaken Air Force global influence and deterrence, Airman morale and readiness, and public trust and support.

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## PA TASKS

Last Updated: 19 June 2014

[Public affairs](#) (PA) operations begin at home, before the first [Airman](#) deploys, and continue long after the last Airman is redeployed. PA operations focus on six synergistic tasks to achieve the desired effects of its core [competencies](#). Despite the distinctions among the tasks, PA organizations should be organized for desired effects and not necessarily around these tasks. For instance, there is no longer any real distinction between command information and media operations—communications with these two audiences should be consistent.

The tasks in PA operations are:

- ✦ Command information.
- ✦ Media operations.
- ✦ Community engagement.
- ✦ Visual information.
- ✦ Security review.
- ✦ Communication planning and synchronization.

### Command information

Providing timely, accurate, and useful information to Air Force personnel results in informed support for the Air Force mission and degrades the effectiveness of adversary disinformation, [propaganda](#), or deception campaigns. PA operations provide the tools to help commanders respond to concerns of Air Force members and their families, and to enhance Airman morale and readiness. Although [joint task force](#) (JTF) commanders may establish a command information operation within the JTF public affairs structure, Service-specific command information remains the responsibility of the Service component commander.

PA operations inform Airmen, contractors, retirees, and all affiliated family members throughout the Air Force's regular, National Guard, and Reserve components on Air Force operations and issues. This audience should be a high priority in any

communication strategy to ensure maximum combat effectiveness and readiness to deploy and support Air Force operations. Effective command information also delivers the highest sustainable morale, productivity, and retention.

Broadcast and musical operations play important roles with command information. Each employs unique delivery methods to inform and entertain audiences worldwide. These operations enhance Airman morale and can influence foreign decision makers and public audiences as they provide information that demonstrates Air Force readiness, operational capabilities, and resolve to use airpower to achieve operational objectives.

## Media operations

PA operations interact with the mass media to provide a flow of information to the public. Wider public awareness occurs when this information reaches national opinion leaders since they may amplify the information in their varied public interactions. Effective media operations bring Air Force issues to the public agenda and help to gain and maintain public support for Air Force operations. Commanders may need to engage local, regional, national, or international media representatives, depending on the operation. Commanders who aggressively use PA operations to gain predictive awareness of the public information environment can often successfully preempt media issues and set the tone and message in the [information environment](#) (IE). Conversely, failure to employ effective media operations can place commanders in a reactive stance, responding to the public debate established by an adversary or questions driving the news media agenda. A reactive posture allows for messages and tones in the national or international media to be set by others, and degrades the effectiveness of PA operations.

Modern technologies tend to blur the lines between command information and media operations in the IE. Commanders and PA operators should be aware that information released for internal audience consumption can quickly enter the external media environment

*The flight test area R-2508 at Edwards AFB, home of the Air Force Test Center (AFTC), is 160 miles long by 60 miles wide and contains several communities that regularly complain about the noise from test aircraft. The US Air Force Band of the Golden West, working closely with the AFTC public affairs office, created a series of concerts called "A Different Kind of Air Force Noise," targeting specific communities in the area. The band invited senior Air Force leaders from Edwards to serve as concert sponsors and explain AFTC's mission and its importance to the Air Force. The communities targeted, once responsible for 70 percent of noise complaints received by the base, now comprise only five percent of complaints.*

**—Multiple Sources**

## Community engagement

Effective community engagement builds an informed public that is more inclined to be supportive of Air Force operations and initiatives and less susceptible to the effects of adversary misinformation attempts or inaccurate media reports. In many deployed environments, effective community engagement is vital to the success of Air Force operations. Forward-area community engagement in a [contingency](#) will usually fall within the scope of a civil affairs plan (see JP 3-57, [Civil-Military Operations](#)). PA operators must be aware of the civil affairs efforts and, when possible, complement them in PA products and operations. For example, Air Force bands are a strategic engagement tool capable of establishing access to foreign audiences.

In peacetime, active community engagement programs help to build greater acceptance for Air Force operations within US and international audiences. Greater public acceptance of the Air Force can be a key to future operational success since it may lead to basing or overflight rights, shortened community “no-fly” or quiet hours, and other operationally important community support efforts.

## Visual information

Strong imagery is a key component of effective communication. Using its photo, video, and graphics visual information (VI) assets, PA ensures Air Force wartime, contingency, and historical and newsworthy events are accurately visually recorded. Commanders at all levels may use this imagery for their communication needs as well as a tool for operational planning and decision making. Other mission-related imagery uses include support to training, battle damage assessment, and public information. Commanders should ensure VI assets are directed to mission-related activities. DoD 5040.6-M-1, *Decision Logic Table Instructions for Recording and Handling Visual Information Material*, should be the source for prioritizing VI requirements. VI also ensures collection and accession of graphics, photographic, or video products through Air Force and DOD channels to the National Archives.

Combat Camera (COMCAM) is a specialized VI capability that provides the Secretary of Defense, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS), [combatant commanders](#), and the Air Force with a directed imagery capability in support of operations and planning requirements during worldwide crises, contingencies, exercises, and wartime operations. Air Force COMCAM teams are uniquely trained, equipped, and organized for rapid global deployment to provide documentation of air and ground operations. Fully qualified and equipped for day/night operations, COMCAM units also possess fully certified/qualified aircrew members for missions requiring aerial documentation.

## Security review

The security review program directly supports other Air Force information security activities by providing clearance and review of official information for security, accuracy, propriety, and adherence to policy. The intent is not to censor unclassified information—security review helps prevent the inadvertent release of classified material and

information with essential elements of friendly information or technology transfer. Commanders should ensure PA operations are closely integrated with their staffs to minimize delay in providing security review of operational products like imagery, weapons and cockpit video, and other products that demonstrate Air Force capabilities. The security review also promotes consistency in the type of unclassified information released to the public.

*During Operation ALLIED FORCE in 1999, the 48th Fighter Wing at RAF Lakenheath deployed two fighter squadrons to Italy. Additionally, combat sorties were flown over Serbia from RAF Lakenheath by a third fighter squadron. This meant around-the-clock operations and night-flying for the base, operational security concerns regarding the base and US children of deployed parents in local British schools, and decreased numbers of American patrons at local businesses. The 48<sup>th</sup> Fighter Wing commander invited local community leaders to a briefing about RAF Lakenheath's role in the operation and the operation's importance to European stability. The interaction also was an opportunity for community leaders to ask questions and highlight concerns from their constituents. As a result, the community leaders offered their public support for the US and NATO mission and established a lasting relationship with base leaders to address potentially adverse public issues during the operation.*

—Multiple Sources

## Communication planning and synchronization

Strategic communication planning is necessary for all other PA capabilities and tasks. PA operators must gain awareness of the aspects of the total information environment affecting their location or operation. They should also have the means to evaluate and analyze aspects of the IE. PA operators rely on portions of [operation plans](#) (OPLANs), lessons learned and an understanding of the information environment to build plans that help to achieve a commander's desired effects. It is essential to overall mission success that PA is a part of the strategy development and planning phases of an operation to ensure its capabilities are employed to their full effectiveness.

PA operations can play an important role in the transition from combat operations to post-conflict [stability operations](#). Given the fluid nature of military operations, it is likely that aspects of both combat operations and actions typically associated with stability operations will be ongoing at the same time. PA operations can help define public perception of ongoing nation building or other stability operations and are contingent upon the clear and proper articulation of allied objectives. Success will in large part be determined by the amount and quality of planning efforts for PA operations in preparation for transition between types of operations.



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## ANNEX 3-61 PUBLIC AFFAIRS OPERATIONS

### PA ROLES IN INFORMATION OPERATIONS

Last Updated: 19 June 2014

Public affairs (PA) operations are an important component of informational flexible deterrent options (IFDOs) and build a commander's predictive awareness of the international public information environment and the means to use information to create effects across the spectrum of Air Force operations. PA operations are a key military information-related capability (IRC) with the ability to create decisive effects in support of information operations (IO), and in support of the other activities, such as counterpropaganda operations. As an important military IRC, **PA operations are a force multiplier by analyzing and influencing the information environment's effect on military operations.** PA operations have the opportunity to create the greatest effect before the onset of hostilities. The strategic effect PA operations can create highlights the importance in ensuring PA personnel are involved at the earliest planning stages as well as during the execution and assessment of operations. It also highlights the importance of ensuring PA operations are synchronized and deconflicted with other IRCs through IO.



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## ANNEX 3-61 PUBLIC AFFAIRS OPERATIONS

### STRATEGIC EFFECTS

Last Updated: 19 June 2014

Public affairs (PA) operations can achieve effects at the strategic level of war. One crucial PA operation is the execution of informational flexible deterrent options (IFDOs) listed in the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) Joint Strategic Capabilities Plan. Along with diplomatic, military, and economic means, the JCS recognizes information as an instrument of national power. IFDOs are options available to commanders as alternative, non-kinetic courses of action to accomplish operational missions other than “bombs on target.” IFDOs heighten public awareness; promote national and coalition policies, aims, and objectives for an operation; seek to build public support for operations; and counter adversary propaganda and disinformation in the public information environment.

Air Force PA operations are among the commander’s IFDO options that enable a commander to address issues surrounding a crisis or conflict through the use of public information. These options include:

- ✦ Maintaining an open dialog through the media with domestic and international audiences.
- ✦ Articulating US (and/or coalition) policies, aims, and objectives.
- ✦ Gaining and maintaining public support for the operation.
- ✦ Heightening adversary awareness of the potential for conflict.
- ✦ Combating adversary deception efforts.
- ✦ Countering adversary propaganda efforts.

The news media and other information networks in the public information environment have a significant impact on military operations, national will, political direction, and national security objectives. **PA contributes to global influence and deterrence by making foreign leaders and populations aware of US capabilities and resolve.** PA operations comprise a powerful capability that can be used to achieve far-reaching effects on an adversary, while defending friendly forces from an adversary’s efforts to manipulate the public information environment. **PA serves as the Air Force lead for the counterpropaganda mission in the public information environment by**

## **countering adversary propaganda and maintaining public support and trust for US military operations.**

Maintaining an open dialogue with the news media communicates the leadership's concern with the issues and allows the correct information to be placed in the public information environment and helps to satisfy the media's near-constant desire for current information. PA operations provide truthful, timely, and accurate information, helping to stem media speculation and prevent the possibility of the media presenting only one side of the story—the adversary's. This flow of information heightens public awareness and helps gain and maintain public support. The increased media attention may also place enormous pressures on foreign leaders and governments, affecting their decision-making processes.

Heightening adversary awareness of the potential for conflict by maintaining issue prominence in the public information environment helps focus national and international pressure on our opponents or would-be adversaries. Consistent interest is sometimes difficult to achieve because news media outlets must use their resources to gather stories of interest to readers and viewers. A lull in operations may result in disinterested media. To lessen the likelihood of disinterested media, PA operations should include news media in unit deployment preparations, expand the number of regional and hometown media involved, offer high-level spokespersons, provide strong visuals and offer opportunities to do and see things they otherwise would not—like embedding reporters with operational units. These efforts take careful planning and a clear understanding of the effect desired by keeping issues in the news.

PA operations also deliver a virtual force projection IFDO. While a common approach is to withhold information to prevent any possible degradation of planned or actual military operations, commanders should consider the possible advantages of releasing certain information—time-critical and truthful information—after proper security review to demonstrate US resolve, intent, or preparations. Rather than providing an advantage to an adversary, the carefully coordinated release of operational information in some situations can intimidate a rival government or adversary, deter conflict, and counter adversary propaganda while also maintaining or building support for military operations.

*As tensions grew in the days before the US launched Operation IRAQI FREEDOM in 2003, the US publicly highlighted the devastating capabilities of its newest weapon—the Massive Ordnance Air Blast, or MOAB. International media used the video images and information provided to tell the story of one of the tools now in the US arsenal for use against Iraq and other possible adversaries. The media called the weapon the “monster bomb” and the “Mother of All Bombs,” sending a clear message of extraordinary capability to the US population—and a strong, visual warning to would-be aggressors. The images and information did not result in a peaceful solution to the problems in Iraq but are an important piece of information thousands of Iraqi soldiers may have used in their decisions to surrender.*

**—Multiple Sources**

[Operations security](#) protects friendly forces by denying an adversary critical information about US or coalition operations. A critical information list of sensitive information and indicators is developed prior to a contingency to help ensure that deploying military personnel and embedded media are aware of information considered non-releasable. While dealing openly with the media and providing accurate information, Air Force personnel must ensure the release of information does not adversely affect national security or threaten the safety of US and coalition forces. Commanders should emphasize this approach, which protects sensitive information and enables PA operations to deliver their full potential. Embedded media may encounter classified information and should sign a nondisclosure agreement as part of their ground rules for being embedded. This method allows the reporter to truly become part of the unit, building understanding and knowledge which improves their work. Nondisclosure agreements also help to ensure the reporter does not deliberately disclose classified information.

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## ANNEX 3-61 PUBLIC AFFAIRS OPERATIONS

### COUNTERPROPAGANDA

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Counterpropaganda operations involve those efforts to negate, neutralize, diminish the effects of, or gain an advantage from foreign psychological operations or [propaganda](#) efforts. Numerous organizations and activities (e.g., [intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance](#) [ISR] operations; [public affairs](#) (PA); or other military units and commanders) can identify adversary propaganda operations attempting to influence friendly populations and military forces. Commanders at all levels should integrate activities designed to disseminate truthful information; mitigate adversary messages; and disrupt, degrade, and disable adversary psychological operations. Such efforts might range from specific PA operations to convey accurate information to the targeted audiences and mitigate the intended effects of adversary propaganda, to efforts to physically destroy adversary propaganda resources and assets.

Public affairs serves as the Air Force lead for the counterpropaganda mission in the public information environment by countering adversary propaganda and maintaining public support and trust for US military operations. Gaining and maintaining the information initiative in a conflict can be a powerful weapon to defeat propaganda. The integrated use of PA operations and other information-related capabilities to respond to collateral damage charges also represents a valuable tool for the commander. The commander must strive to gain and maintain the information initiative by rapidly providing truthful and accurate information to the public first. The first out with information often sets the context, frames the public debate, and often drives others into a reactionary stance in order to refute the information. It is extremely important to get complete, truthful information out first—especially information about friendly forces' mistakes so that it is friendly forces that expose the errors and put them into accurate context. This helps to disarm adversary propaganda and defeat attempts by an adversary to exploit these mistakes for their propaganda value. Use of PA capabilities to fully inform friendly forces about international, national, and internal events can help insulate friendly forces from the effects of adversary propaganda operations.

Adversaries of the United States have used propaganda during many conflicts, and most propaganda activities play out through the domestic and international news media. While we may anticipate an adversary will twist information to suit their propaganda purposes against the US, our PA operations are truth-based, and will not intentionally misinform the United States Congress, public, or media.



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## ANNEX 3-61 PUBLIC AFFAIRS OPERATIONS

### **MILITARY INFORMATION SUPPORT OPERATIONS (MISO)**

Last Updated: 19 June 2014

Military information support operations (MISO) are defined as “planned operations to convey selected information and indicators to foreign audiences to influence their emotions, motives, objective reasoning, and ultimately the behavior of foreign governments, organizations, groups, and individuals in a manner favorable to the originator’s objectives.” (JP 3-13.2, *Information Operations*). Air Force MISO contribute to counterpropaganda missions by amplifying key themes and messages among foreign audiences, reaching populations in media markets inaccessible by public affairs (PA) operations, identifying adversary propaganda themes and methods, and providing psychosocial data on prospective target audiences. PA operations disseminate a continuous flow of trusted, reliable, timely, and accurate information to military and civilian Air Force people, their families, the media, and the public. This capability allows PA operations to help defeat adversary efforts to diminish national will, degrade morale, and turn world opinion against Air Force operations. Countering such messages from adversaries can be vital to successful operations and accomplishing mission objectives.

*In late 1990, before the start of Operation DESERT STORM, US amphibious training was conducted in the Persian Gulf. The training demonstrated the US force's amphibious capability, as well as US and Coalition resolve concerning the crisis. Inevitably, journalists asked if an amphibious invasion was planned. In keeping with operational guidelines for discussing information with the media, military officials wouldn't comment on future operations. Even though an amphibious landing ultimately was not conducted during Operation DESERT STORM, Iraqi perception of the US and Coalition capability and resolve may have caused them to conclude that an amphibious invasion was likely. As a result of their perception, Iraqi forces may have focused additional attention and resources that could have been employed elsewhere to defend against an amphibious invasion that never materialized.*

**—DOD Final Report to Congress,  
Conduct of the Persian Gulf War, April 1992**

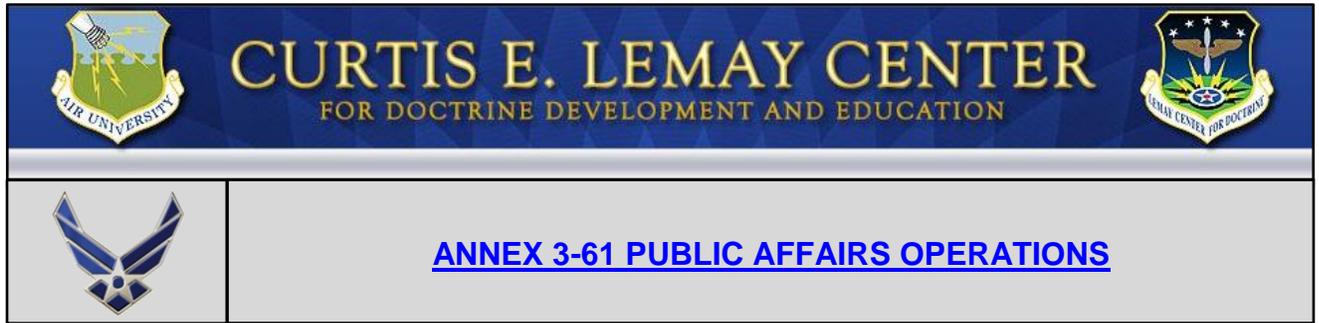
US policy prohibits MISO targeted at or intended to mislead or influence any US citizens whether within or outside the United States. Although PA operations may provide truth-

based information that assists in countering adversary propaganda, PA personnel do not engage in MISO activities.

Commanders should ensure PA operations are deconflicted with MISO. PA operations communicate US resolve and commitment to international audiences in a manner that can shape the [information environment](#) (IE) and inform decision makers. MISO information and information prepared for public release must be coordinated to ensure the messages to the respective audiences are not contradictory. Public trust in and support for the Air Force could be undermined or lost if the perception develops that a spokesperson attempted to deceive or lie to the public directly or through the media. Lying, or the perception of it, immediately degrades the effectiveness of military operations and destroys domestic and friendly-nation support. Not only is using false information in PA operations contrary to DOD policy and practice, but if false information were ever intentionally used in PA operations, the public trust and support for the Air Force could be undermined and the capabilities provided by PA operations would be degraded.

Commanders also should be aware that, in the IE, the media and the US public could receive information related to military deception plans or efforts. Public affairs and military deception operations should be coordinated to ensure that credibility of US operations and communications is retained. Close coordination also can prevent the inadvertent compromise of a deception plan. PA operations can document displays of force but must not simulate force projection by using false information.

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## ANALYSIS AND DISSEMINATION

Last Updated: 19 June 2014

[Public affairs](#) (PA) operations' analytical and dissemination capabilities make them integral to enhancing air, space, and cyberspace operations. The collection, analysis, and release of information about ongoing Air Force operations are part of the daily workload of activities such as public affairs, broadcasting, visual information, combat camera (COMCAM), and recruiting. PA personnel have keen awareness of the public [information environment](#) as a result of communications with the [chain of command](#) and analyzing media products from varied sources. Commanders can leverage this situational awareness to adjust their PA operations to increase public awareness of Air Force operations, capabilities, and resolve. The information analyzed and disseminated can help provide predictive awareness of the public information environment to warfighters, allowing them to preempt some effects of a crisis, frame the public debate, and make well-informed decisions.

Assessing the IE and the effects from PA operations gives the commander a more comprehensive view. Multiple aspects of the IE require analysis to enable effective operations. The international news media, social media, international web sites, internet discussions, and coalition PA operations are just a few elements forming and impacting the IE. PA personnel must understand the priorities and perspectives of key domestic and international audiences to effectively assess the IE and the effects of PA operations.

PA personnel should be able to evaluate public communication in a way that enables them to assess PA effectiveness in achieving commander's objectives. Well-written objectives and targeted data collection are necessary to analyze the effect and impact of PA activities. There are two general types of research: formative and evaluative. Formative research provides the analysis necessary to plan PA activities. Evaluative research provides analysis of the effectiveness and efficiency of these activities. PA personnel should look to all feedback sources to assist in evaluating what additional information, messages, and programs are necessary to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the PA activities. In some cases, this information will be readily available through the internet, print media, television, radio, or existing opinion research. In other cases, PA personnel may need to plan to fund media clip services, media translation, or commissioned focus groups or polls in order to obtain the required information.

PA operations also process information from past Air Force operations for use in current or projected operations. Lessons learned, after-action reports, historical records, and

museum programs are the primary resources for analyzing and preparing information for dissemination about the historical activities of the Air Force. The integrated efforts of these activities often result in dissemination of historical information to assist commanders in achieving desired effects in the public information environment.

The products and programs from these analytical and dissemination efforts can provide unique avenues to help commanders foster public understanding and support for operations. They also can be sources of information to help warfighters apply lessons from the past to current operations.

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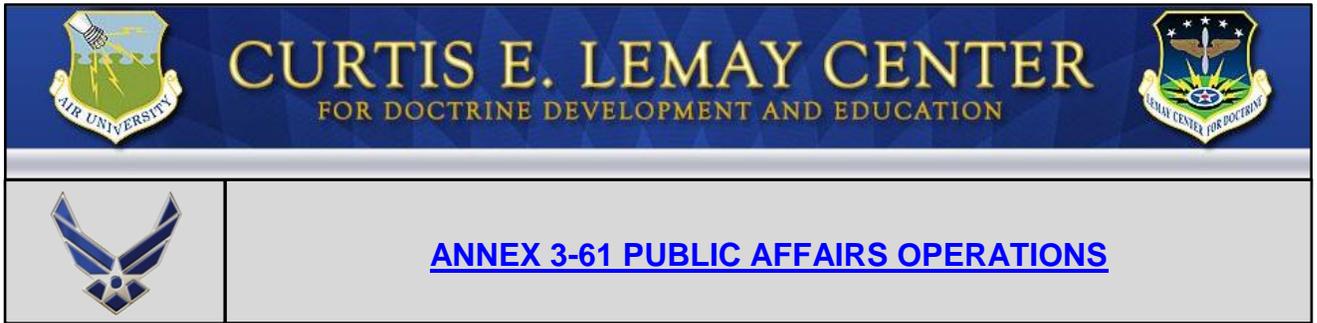
## ANNEX 3-61 PUBLIC AFFAIRS OPERATIONS

### OPERATIONAL ENGAGEMENT

Last Updated: 19 June 2014

Public affairs (PA) operations are continuously conducted across the range of military operations. The continuous planning, execution, and assessment of the broad range of PA operations enhance a commander's ability to shape the information environment, achieve desired effects, and meet operational objectives. The basic principles, capabilities, and tasks of PA operations remain the same whether units are at home station or deployed—only the specific focus of the operations change. PA operations are most effective in war or contingencies when integrated with other information-related capabilities and are part of strategy development, planning, and execution phases of operations.

While providing the commander, Air Force forces with communication advice in support of operations, **PA should be fully integrated into the activities of the air operations center (AOC) and should coordinate and synchronize with the activities of the combat information cell (CIC).** PA personnel in the AOC develop communication strategies and plans, and monitor current operations for emerging issues that have the potential to impact the overall operation in a positive or negative fashion (e.g., a successful strike using a new weapon system, civilian casualties, fratricide, etc.). PA expertise is essential to interpret events in the information environment and enhances the operational courses of action available to commanders, particularly when fully integrated into the campaign plan.



## COMMAND RELATIONSHIPS WHILE DEPLOYED

Last Reviewed: 19 June 2014

[Public affairs](#) (PA) personnel and Air Force units [assigned](#) or [attached](#) to a unified or joint command are subject to PA guidance from the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs (OASD-PA) as well as from unified command guidance. As such, they must coordinate efforts through the PA staff of the [joint force commander](#) (JFC). In overseas theaters, each US embassy has a country team that oversees PA operations to ensure they support established country plan objectives. Many [information operations](#) (IO) are strategic in nature and require PA personnel, in coordination with OASD-PA, to work closely with the country teams throughout planning and execution phases. This close coordination of effort ensures operational key themes and messages and PA and IO objectives support US objectives and diplomatic efforts within affected foreign nations and prevent conflicting communication efforts or other unintended consequences.

PA operations are most effective when backed by the authority and credibility of the [commander, Air Force forces](#) (COMAFFOR) [or joint force air component commander](#) (JFACC). Subordinating PA operations to a lower command echelon is contrary to Department of Defense (DOD) and Chair, Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS) policy, reduces access to critical information, hampers reaction time and may degrade PA credibility with various public audiences and media organizations. Maintaining the direct relationship between the commanders and PA staff provides the best opportunities for success when employing PA operations.

During joint operations, the [supported commander](#) normally exercises [operational control](#) of assigned forces and [tactical control](#) of attached forces. An overall PA operations communication plan should be developed by the joint community and reflected in the PA annex to the [operation plan](#) (OPLAN) or [contingency plan](#). Separate but mutually supporting plans also should be developed for each component.

Air component PA planners normally will prepare the PA annex to the OPLAN and determine the communications requirements, associated costs and equipment, and total number of PA personnel required in theater. Air component PA planners are responsible for ensuring PA plans support the JFC's intent and objectives. They also are responsible for ensuring the integration of PA forces into the [air operations center](#) (AOC) and **combat information cell** (CIC). PA personnel who deploy to forward locations in support of air expeditionary wings, groups, or other Air Force units will usually report through their chain of command to receive functional support and guidance from the COMAFFOR PA or air component PA.

The JFC will normally establish a media operations center (MOC) to provide guidance and supervision for media operations to all supporting components. Unless the MOC also establishes a command information function, unit internal information initiatives will normally be coordinated with the COMAFFOR PA staff and provide support for Air Force units in the forward area and at home.

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## ANNEX 3-61 PUBLIC AFFAIRS OPERATIONS

### INTEGRATION WITH OPERATIONS

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Within the [air operations center](#) (AOC), the director of PA is the senior air component public affairs officer (PAO) in the operating area. The PAO is responsible for [planning and executing PA operations](#) to support and create the desired effects necessary to accomplish the commander's operational objectives. PA liaisons may be aligned in the combat information cell (CIC) or the strategy, combat plans, or combat operations divisions of the AOC. These liaisons in the AOC and CIC serve in a planning/deconflicting capacity. Liaisons to AOC divisions/teams coordinate plans with the senior PAO. PA operations are executed by the PA team.

*Air Force public affairs Airmen were integrated into the CENTAF (Central Air Forces) AOC at a level never seen before in Operation IRAQI FREEDOM. A PA officer served as full-time liaison to the AOC Strategy and Combat Plans cells for two weeks prior to the initiation of combat. During combat, two PA Airmen served on the AOC floor at all times. These PA officers maintained a constant situational awareness of planned actions and ongoing combat ops and shared that information with Air Force and joint PA Airmen across the theater. This enabled CFACC (combined forces air and space component commander) to anticipate, preempt and effectively mitigate much of the enemy propaganda intended to constrain air operations. PA integration in the AOC also increased accuracy and reduced cycle times for responses to media queries and enhanced PA integration with other information-related capabilities.*

**—CFACC/PA during Operation IRAQI FREEDOM, 2003**

[Information Operations/Non-Kinetic Operations](#) (IO/NKO) teams help integrate IO and NKO activities into joint air component operations plans (see Annex 3-13, [Information Operations](#), and JP 3-13, [Information Operations](#), for detailed discussion of IO/NKO specialty team responsibilities). IO/NKO specialty teams support planning and development of [courses of action](#) (COAs) for operations. They also ensure the [joint force commander's](#) (JFC's) information-related effects and objectives are fully integrated in the [joint air operations plan](#).

The success of a [campaign plan](#) may depend on the information superiority achieved by coordinating and integrating all [information-related capabilities](#) (IRCs) into a seamless effort. The composition of IO/NKO specialty teams may vary based on the overall mission of the force, the role of IO/NKO in accomplishing the JFC's objectives, and the adversary's IRCs.

While PA operations should be closely coordinated with the IO/NKO specialty team, the timely flow of information for release in the public [information environment](#) (IE) should not be impeded if it will have a detrimental effect. PA professionals directly advise the commander and deliver truthful time critical information to meet commanders' desired effects.

During every phase of contingency operations, PA specialists should be represented in the AOC and CIC. The training and experience of PA professionals in dealing with the public and news media make them a key to achieving the commander's objectives related to the public information environment. The PA role in coordinating and deconflicting information is vital because PA personnel are the agents for releasing official information to the public and keeping Air Force audiences informed.

The characteristics of the IE demand synergy between PA operations and the ISR division. The ISR division is the organization within the AOC primarily responsible for battlespace awareness. Battlespace awareness is the result of continuous information gathering and analysis, using a variety of functions. **The synergy between PA operations, which uses open-source information, and operations, which primarily uses classified information, is crucial to gaining and maintaining information dominance.** Close coordination to promptly sanitize and release sensitive information without compromising sources or operations can be highly valuable for countering adversary [propaganda](#), illuminating adversary deception or denial tactics and to highlight US precision, discrimination, and discretion.

*During IRAQI FREEDOM, PA planners in the AOC worked with MISO planners to develop news releases about Commando Solo broadcasts and leaflet drops. The PA operations cell released information about MISO efforts to US and international news media as MISO missions were executed, keeping the public informed of MISO as they occurred. This approach preempted the enemy's attempts to counter the MISO missions, as well as keeping the US and international audiences informed of coalition communication efforts directed at enemy forces.*

**—Multiple Sources**

PA operators at any level must be prepared to work in any security environment. PA planners must have the clearances and unescorted access (where permitted) to all elements of the AOC, including intelligence, special access programs (SAPs) or special access requirements (SAR) facilities. PA forces cannot provide trusted counsel to commanders on PA operations without clearances and access to the full operational picture. PA personnel must understand Air Force warfighting organization, concepts, and terminology as well as basic principles of classifying information and foreign

disclosure procedures. Not only does this enable PA operators to properly communicate Air Force information and capabilities, but it increases their usefulness and credibility with the public, commanders, and other Air Force disciplines and functions.

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FOR DOCTRINE DEVELOPMENT AND EDUCATION



## ANNEX 3-61 PUBLIC AFFAIRS OPERATIONS

### PLANNING, DEPLOYMENT, EXECUTION, AND ASSESSMENT

Last Reviewed: 19 June 2014

Effective [public affairs](#) (PA) operations planning must be fully coordinated with and integrated into the [strategy development](#) and planning processes from the outset to achieve synergy with other plans. The PA plan is an important annex within the air component [operation plan](#) (OPLAN). PA personnel, particularly those at air component commands, must also work closely with the [information operations](#) (IO) team to develop IO [courses of action](#) and plans that are fully integrated and deconflicted throughout the planning, deployment, execution, and assessment phases of a [campaign](#).

*It is important that the news media have appropriate access to many aspects of DoD activities and operations. Consistent with applicable laws and procedures, we are obliged to ensure that the information provided to them is timely, accurate, credible, and consistent. I have said many times that we must strive to be as open, accessible, and transparent as possible.*

**—Memo from Secretary of Defense Robert Gates, 2010**

#### Planning

Air Force PA operations, through [direct liaison authorized](#) (DIRLAUTH), support informational objectives of the US national leadership, the DOD, federal agencies, state and civil authorities, combatant commands, [joint task forces](#) (JTFs), major commands (MAJCOM), and subordinate units. [Planning](#) for PA operations is driven by the DOD and must be conducted at all levels of command and across the [range of military operations](#). Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense (OASD)-PA and the [joint force commander's](#) (JFC's) plans for PA operations guide efforts at lower echelons of command. Planning by subordinate units should be based on the assessed information needs and opportunities of their commands and should be consistent with the plans and objectives of higher commands. Responsibility for coordination and deconfliction of [planning and operations](#) rests with the subordinate command PA staff.

Planning for PA operations is reflected in two types of documents: communications plans and OPLANs. Commanders oversee the development of communication plans, which should use all activities available to carry out PA operations. These plans focus on strategic and tactical communication. Strategic plans provide direction for long-

range communication efforts concerning the organizational mission and objectives, while tactical plans direct communication on specific operations, events, or issues. In OPLANS, commanders should identify the tasks and resources required to achieve their informational and strategic communication objectives in a PA annex. PA planners should review OPLANS and consider all PA tasks (internal information, media operations, community relations, visual information, security review, and strategic communication planning) to achieve desired effects in the [information environment](#). This consideration should include all products and resources available – internal print, web products, radio and television broadcasting, visual information services, civic groups and community relations, combat camera (COMCAM), and musical programs. PA issues and requirements should be included in all aspects of peacetime, wartime, and contingency planning. Particular attention should be paid to the role PA plays during transition into and out of wartime operations, as public opinion and support are especially important during these times.

## Deployment

Personnel engaged in PA operations should be among the first people sent into a theater (situation permitting) when engaged in deployed operations. **Positive and/or balanced media coverage at the outset of military action can rapidly influence public and political opinion and affect strategic decision making.** Therefore, commanders should consider deploying PA personnel, especially COMCAM when the situation requires its unique capabilities, with the first units. They should deploy with the equipment needed to accomplish their missions to ensure timely, accurate reporting and documentation of the operation. PA operations should be closely coordinated to obtain a synergy of effect and avoid duplication of effort. These PA assets also can help the commander interpret the public information environment from the strategy development and planning phases to the start of an operation, propose public affairs courses of action appropriate for the situation, and adjust decision making accordingly.

## Execution

Commanders ensure PA operations are able to support the range of contingencies, from bare-base operations to establishing a media operations center (MOC). The primary goal is to expedite the flow of accurate and timely information about the activities of US and coalition forces.

Effective PA operations at the JTF or [unified command](#) level may require close coordination between the US military, the Department of State (DOS), and other US government agencies. Normally, an executive order defines agency responsibilities, functions, and [interagency](#) relationships. Either the senior DOS representative or the JFC will be assigned overall responsibility for US activities in the area. PA operations can also, and often do, work in concert with agencies outside the Air Force, including other Services, coalition partners, government agencies, and private organizations.

In foreign countries, the President normally acts through an ambassador or chief of mission, who relies on a country team comprised of representatives from various agencies assigned to the US embassy or mission. The country team is concerned with matters involving PA operations and other activities that may affect the attitudes of the host-nation population. Therefore, commanders should require coordination of major

PA initiatives with the appropriate country team to ensure release of consistent information supporting US national interests and command objectives.

## **Assessment**

[Assessment](#) of PA operations is fundamental to the plan/execute/assess cycle. PA measures of effectiveness must be developed and integrated as a subset of commanders' information [measures of effectiveness](#) used to gauge success in gaining [information superiority](#). PA professionals should use classified and unclassified information sources—media reporting, polling data, intelligence reporting, adversary [propaganda](#), etc.—to measure the effectiveness of their efforts in the public information environment and accordingly adjust their communication strategies to achieve the commander's desired effects. The air component commander's PA staff should consider these factors when building the communication objectives. Objectives should be clear, concise, and attainable—and therefore measurable. As with all assessment, there should be both near-term and long-range evaluation of success. This assessment folds back into the planning effort to ensure mid-course updates to the plan are properly executed.

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## ANNEX 3-61 PUBLIC AFFAIRS OPERATIONS

### **APPENDIX A: DODD 5122.05, ENCLOSURE 2: PRINCIPLES OF INFORMATION**

Last Reviewed: 19 June 2014

DODD 5122.05, Assistant Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs (ASD(PA))  
5 September 2008, Enclosure 2

#### ENCLOSURE 2 PRINCIPLES OF INFORMATION

It is the policy of the Department of Defense to make available timely and accurate information so that the public, Congress, and the news media may assess and understand the facts about national security and defense strategy. Requests for information from organizations and private citizens shall be answered in a timely manner. In carrying out the policy, the following principles of information will apply:

- a. Information will be made fully and readily available, consistent with the statutory requirements, unless its release is precluded by current and valid security classification. The provisions of the Freedom of Information Act will be supported in both letter and spirit.
- b. A free flow of general and military information will be made available, without censorship or propaganda, to the men and women of the Armed Forces and their dependents.
- c. Information will not be classified or otherwise withheld to protect the Government from criticism or embarrassment.
- d. Information will be withheld only when disclosure would adversely affect national security, threaten the safety or privacy of the men and women of the Armed Forces, or if otherwise authorized by statute or regulation.
- e. The Department of Defense's obligation to provide the public with information on its major programs may require detailed public affairs planning and coordination within the Department of Defense and with the other Government agencies. The sole purpose of such activity is to expedite the flow of information to the public; propaganda has no place in DoD public affairs programs.



**ANNEX 3-61 PUBLIC AFFAIRS OPERATIONS**

**APPENDIX B: DODD 5122.05, ENCLOSURE 3: STATEMENT OF DOD PRINCIPLES FOR NEWS MEDIA COVERAGE OF DOD OPERATIONS**

Last Reviewed: 19 June 2014

DODD 5122.05, Assistant Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs (ASD (PA))  
5 September 2008, Enclosure 3

ENCLOSURE 3

STATEMENT OF DOD PRINCIPLES FOR NEWS MEDIA COVERAGE OF  
DOD OPERATIONS

1. Open and independent reporting shall be the principal means of coverage of U.S. military operations.
2. Media pools (limited number of news media who represent a larger number of news media organizations for news gatherings and sharing of material during a specified activity) are not to serve as the standard means of covering U.S. military operations. However, they sometimes may provide the only means of early access to a military operation. In this case, media pools should be as large as possible and disbanded at the earliest opportunity (in 24 to 36 hours, when possible). The arrival of early-access media pools shall not cancel the principle of independent coverage for journalists already in the area.
3. Even under conditions of open coverage, pools may be applicable for specific events, such as those at extremely remote locations or where space is limited.
4. Journalists in a combat zone shall be credentialed by the U.S. military and shall be required to abide by a clear set of military security ground rules that protect U.S. Armed Forces and their operations. Violation of the ground rules may result in suspension of credentials and expulsion from the combat zone of the journalist involved. News organizations shall make their best efforts to assign experienced journalists to combat operations and to make them familiar with U.S. military operations.
5. Journalists shall be provided access to all major military units. Special operations restrictions may limit access in some cases.
6. Military PA officers should act as liaisons, but should not interfere with the reporting process.
7. Under conditions of open coverage, field commanders should be instructed to permit journalists to ride on military vehicles and aircraft when possible. The military shall be responsible for the transportation of pools.

8. Consistent with its capabilities, the military shall supply PA officers with facilities to enable timely, secure, compatible transmission of pool material and shall make those facilities available, when possible, for filing independent coverage. If Government facilities are unavailable, journalists, as always, shall file by any other means available. The military shall not ban communications systems operated by news organizations, but electromagnetic operational security in battlefield situations may require limited restrictions on the use of such systems.

9. Those principles in paragraph 8 shall apply as well to the operations of the standing DOD National Media Pool system.

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