



PUBLIC AFFAIRS CORE COMPETENCIES

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Public affairs' (PA) four core competencies describe the primary ways PA contributes to overall mission accomplishment. The following are the core competencies of PA operations:

CORE COMPETENCIES

- ★ Trusted counsel to leaders.
- ★ Service member morale and readiness.
- ★ Public trust and support.
- ★ Global influence and [deterrence](#).

These synergistic competencies are core contributions of PA operations to the mission and are conducted across the range of military operations. PA capabilities 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 provides commanders and other Service leaders with candid, timely, trusted and accurate counsel and guidance on the productive employment of PA capabilities to achieve effects of within the [information environment](#) (IE) as well as assessing the impact of operations on the IE and ultimately on the mission. This PA competency includes providing predictive awareness of the IE 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.

Morale and readiness

The morale and readiness of the Service's personnel directly translate into combat capability for the Service. PA helps personnel to understand their roles in the mission and explains how policies, programs, and operations affect them and their families.

PA operations convey truthful, credible, and useful information to support morale and

readiness, and provide the Service with capabilities to counter misinformation, disinformation, [propaganda](#) and other forms of malign influence 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 counters adversary propaganda efforts and helps factors that cause stress and undermine efficient operations such as confusion, boredom, uncertainty, fear, or rumors.

PA also contributes to readiness by helping to increase Service member's understanding of the law of war, rules of engagement, and respect for the protections provided to noncombatants.

Informed and knowledgeable members have higher morale and can be relied upon to effectively deliver Service themes and messages as they explain their mission to media representatives, public groups, or individuals. With Service personnel as credible, reliable spokespeople, PA operations can more effectively deliver global influence, deterrence, and public trust and support.

Public trust and support

PA activities build public understanding and support of expenditures for readiness, advanced weapons, training, personnel, and the associated costs of maintaining a strong air, space, and cyberspace force. With public support, the Services' leaders can successfully recruit, train, and equip personnel to meet operational requirements.

PA capabilities give commanders the means to gain and maintain support for the Service among diverse public audiences. These operations strengthen the bonds between the military and the public through open, honest dialogue. Data and imagery, continuously available in near-real time in the IE, can have an immediate effect on public support. Likewise, distorted information and imagery distributed by an adversary can harm national will and the support of military operations. PA capabilities, integrated with other operational capabilities and employed effectively, can enhance a friendly information advantage while also preempting and degrading an enemy's OIE.

To fight and win in the information age, commanders employ PA capabilities in a fashion that fosters ongoing public understanding and support of operational requirements. Commanders leverage capabilities, including bands, visual information, social media, and other products, to transcend traditional media and audience boundaries. The use of the full range of PA capabilities expands the reach and impact of PA operations and its ability to build and enhance public trust and support for military operations.

Global influence and deterrence

PA contributes to global influence and deterrence by communicating US capabilities and resolve to foreign relevant actors, competitors, adversaries. Commanders employ

PA capabilities, in coordination with other [information-related capabilities](#) (IRCs), to develop and execute that leverage the military's informational power. In addition to deterring competitors and adversaries, these efforts can also enhance support from friendly countries.

Information and power projection demonstrating the US or friendly force capabilities and resolve can be effective in causing adversary decision-makers to seek options short of armed 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 by common messages and themes. The 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 an enduring information advantage.

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