



COMMAND RELATIONSHIPS WHILE DEPLOYED

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Public affairs (PA) personnel and 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 should 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 operations in the information environment (OIE), information warfare (IW), or [information operations](#) (IO) efforts have strategic impact and require PA personnel, in coordination with OASD (PA), to work closely with the country teams throughout planning and execution phases. This close coordination ensures these efforts support US objectives and diplomatic efforts and prevent conflicting communication efforts or other unintended consequences.

PA operations are most effective when backed by the authority and credibility of the theater air component commander. Subordinating PA operations to a lower command conflicts with Department of Defense (DOD) and Air Force policy because it reduces access to critical information, hampers reaction time, and may degrade PA credibility with public audiences and media. Maintaining direct relationships between commanders and PA provides the best opportunities for success when employing PA operations.

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.

PA planners typically prepare the PA annex to the OPLAN and determine the communications requirements, associated costs and equipment, and the 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](#). PA personnel who deploy to forward locations in support of air expeditionary wings, groups, or other Air Force units usually report through their chain of command to receive administrative support and guidance from the [commander, Air Force forces](#) (COMAFFOR) 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 command information initiatives will normally be coordinated with the Air Component Commander PA staff.
