



INTEGRATION WITH OPERATIONS

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Within the [air operations center](#) (AOC), the director of public affairs (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 strategy, combat plans, or combat operations divisions of the AOC to serve in a planning and deconflicting capacity.

[Information operations](#) (IO) and Information Warfare (IW) teams and cells help integrate IO and IW activities into joint air component operations plans. While PA operations should be closely coordinated with IO, the timely flow of information for release in the public [information environment](#) (IE) should not be impeded even 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. The expertise of PA professionals in dealing with the public and news media is key to achieving the commander's objectives. 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 stakeholders informed.

The synergy between PA activities that take place in the unclassified environment and operations, which may involve sensitive and classified information, is crucial to gaining and maintaining an information advantage. Close coordination with operations staff and subject matter experts 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 highlighting US precision, discrimination, and discretion.

PA forces cannot provide trusted counsel to commanders without clearances and access to the full operational picture; therefore, PA personnel should have the clearances and unescorted access (where permitted) to all elements of the AOC, including intelligence, special access programs, and special access requirements facilities. PA personnel should understand warfighting organization, concepts, and terminology as well as basic principles of classifying information and foreign disclosure

procedures. This enables PA operators to communicate Service information and capabilities properly, and it increases their usefulness and credibility with the public, commanders, and other Service disciplines and functions.
