



CURTIS E. LEMAY CENTER

FOR DOCTRINE DEVELOPMENT AND EDUCATION



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.