



CURTIS E. LEMAY CENTER

FOR DOCTRINE DEVELOPMENT AND EDUCATION



ANNEX 3-61 PUBLIC AFFAIRS OPERATIONS

COMMAND RELATIONSHIPS WHILE DEPLOYED

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[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.
