ISAF Joint Command Media Operations

Standard Operating Procedures

Media Operations Tasks and Responsibilities: Media Operations is responsible for the Command's media relations activities, including identifying media to engage with to disseminate information, responding to queries, arranging interviews, and advising senior leaders and IJC members on media issues. Media Operations works with local and international media. The staff also manages the IJC media accreditation and embed programs, and works closely with Regional Commands and NATO Training Mission-Afghanistan (NTM-A) Public Affairs staffs. IJC Media Operations distributes, under its letter head, releases from special operations units.

Press Releases: Media Operations disseminates news releases regarding current operations as well as command activities of interest to the general public.

Joint IJC-Afghan Releases: Media Operations staff should strive to issue joint releases with the Afghan National Security Forces as much as possible; whenever a release involves Afghan National Security Forces -- either the Afghan National Army (ANA), Afghan National Police (ANP), National Defense Service (NDS), or all of the above – Media Operations drafts the release as a joint release, with a comment from the Afghan leadership, and coordinates with the appropriate ministries.

Media Queries: Media Operations fields and responds to media queries via phone and e-mail. Based on the nature of the query, Media Operations coordinates the response with the PAO Director as required. See Section (__) for examples of when coordination with the PAO Director is needed. All press officers will monitor the Media Office Inbox (unclass), respond to queries, draft press releases, and facilitate media interviews as required.

Interviews with IJC Leadership Media Operations coordinates interviews with IJC senior leadership and provides preparatory materials, which may include talking points (NATO, ISAF, etc), information on the reporter (bio and recent articles) for those interviews. Media Operations creates and maintain talking points on a variety of issues. The staff also escorts media to these events and prepares interviewees as necessary.

Interviews with Commander, IJC, are referred to the Commander's personal PAO for action.

Release Authority: The Commander, IJC, is the release authority for media information pertaining to the command and its operations. The IJC PAO Director acts on behalf of the Commander in routine authorization of information. See Appendix A (__) for specific authorities based on type of information being released.

MEDIA OPERATIONS CENTER WATCH RESPONSIBILITIES:

CJOC PA Ops Chief: The senior PAO on duty in the CJOC is responsible for managing the information flow and ensuring timely and accurate operational information is provided to the PA Director and staff.

CJOC PA Ops Staff: Monitors current and future and current operations; provides timely and accurate operational information to the senior PAO in the CJOC and staff; and prepares updated incident SITREPS. Tracks serious incidents for follow-on developments and future internal/external PA coverage opportunities.

Information Requirements:
The OPS staff gathers information about events, through observation, interviews and sources, and sifts through the material for Serious Incidents that could result in media interest.

Serious Incidents for IJC include:
Civilian casualties
Friendly Forces casualties
Mass casualty incidents
Attacks on bases, convoys, personnel, and other ISAF assets
Large finds of drugs or weapons
Insurgent casualties or detainments
Local demonstrations.

Information Resources:
The CJOC floor, which features liaison officers (LNO) from every units in theater, as well as the Shift Director and Chief of Operations
The JOC Watch, a Web-based system on ISAF Secret computers that updates with every event that happens in theater
The daily Commander's Update Assessment (CUA) meeting
IJC Battle Major access
Reports from NMT-A, CFSOCC-A and CJTF
Various meetings and reports on topics such as elections, counter-narcotics and the civilian casualty (CIVCAS) cell.

Reporting Procedures: Immediately following a Serious Incident, the Media Ops staff in the CJOC will send an e-mail to the Media Ops group distribution list providing details of the event. The OPS staff also sends out threat assessments, briefings, reports and slides, including First and Second Impression Reports (FIR and SIR) about Serious Incident events. The OPS staff also attends the CUA and encapsulates the briefing in a daily email report.

NEWS RELEASE/MEDIA ADVISORY PROCESS:

All news, feature and general media releases must be checked for:

- An **ISAF link** to the information
- A **link to ANSF/Afghan involvement,** if at all possible for
  - **Issue Dual release with Afghan ANSF** if applicable and possible
- No list of enemy body count, details of wounded
- Newsworthiness of release (information detail and relevance)

News Release (Fatality/CIVCAS):

- Receive info from JOC Watch/RC/Media/Embassy/TF.
- Check details and confirm with relevant RC/CJOC that info is correct.
- Produce MRL (in event of fatality) on Secret side – essentially an update for ISAF PAO staffs (RCs, internal staff etc)
- Post on noticeboard in ISAF Office.
- Email to MRL distribution list (see previously sent MRLs).
- Put relevant info onto ISAF News Release template (unclas) and print original info (original email or detail from RC or original source – should get confirmation from our JOC watch) to go onto back of ISAF sheet for records.
- **FOR ALL CASUALTIES:** Include draft sympathy quote for PAO Director or senior PAO on duty.
- **FOR US CASUALTIES:** Include acknowledgement line stating the member killed was a US service member.
- **FOR NON-US CASUALTIES:** Include statement that ISAF does not release nationality. BEFORE release – check with RC that next of kin have been notified. **NO RELEASE** will be made until relevant nation has confirmed completed next of kin notification.

- Ensure quotes, DIVDS reference or other references used are correct. Spell check and once over again.
- In Press office email send to Distribution Lists 1, 2, 3, 4.
- Once sent, releases need to be saved into the relevant folder on the P Drive.

Feature News Release (General) – good news stories etc.
- Receive information from RC or particular Unit. Check details and confirm with relevant RC that info is correct.
- Put relevant info onto ISAF News Release template (unclas) and print original info (original email or detail from RC or original source) to go onto back of ISAF sheet for records.
- Before being signed off by Media Ops Chief or senior PAO on duty, ensure any quotes, DIVDS reference or other references used are correct. Spellcheck and once over again (always get a second pair of eyes to have a quick read through!).
- In Press office email send to Distribution Lists 1, 2, 3, 4.
- File hard copy with original source and sign off sheet to be put up on wall.

Media Advisory
Any upcoming events that may be of interest to press need to be 'advertised'. Ensure photos/references etc are correct, ISAF does not mention individual units/nations unless specifically required.

Operational Update - This is when there is a change of command as an example and we target the relevant nations (i.e. general release but focus on specific nations that it affects).

RELEASE AUTHORITIES:

Authority to release news and feature releases, media advisories and operational updates is delegated to all RC Chief PAOs and through them down to individual Task Force PAOs, except for the following categories, which will only be released by IJC PAO or HQ ISAF PAO:

(1)   Death or injuries to ISAF troops – releasable by IJC.

(2)   Any Civilian Casualty event – releasable by IJC.

(3)   Catastrophic operational failure (e.g. enemy closure of an airfield) – releasable by IJC.

(4)   Events with wider intra/inter theatre implications (Elections, NATO policies, TCN policies etc) – releasable by HQ ISAF unless specifically delegated.

IJC Release Procedures: The Chief, Media Operations will approve all news releases prior to release. In his absence, the senior on-duty PAO will approve releases, with the exceptions noted below. Any material that directly involves, includes, or highlights members of the command group will be released only by the PAO Director.

Routine Releases: Release authority – Media Ops Duty Officer. Defined as those that relay relatively non-controversial information like "wrap-up of routine operations", found some drugs/weapons, good news stories etc with no civcas. Most of these stories do not need immediate release and can fit into daily working routine. It is important to remember we need to try an involve the ANSF in these releases and as such not rush to get them out, but rather make sure every effort is made to send out as a JOINT release, emphasising that ISAF is in support of the relevant Afghan authority.

NOTE: Routine releases on Friday do not require ANSF coordination due to their low battle rhythm.

Moderately sensitive: Release authority – Senior PAO on duty. Defined as anything we haven't seen before (like a new enemy TTP or the like).

Very Sensitive: Release-Authority – Chief of Media Operations or if not available the Director or Deputy Director of PA. This includes any Civcas, catastrophic Op failure, ISAF fatalities. Anything with strategic significance needs to be authorised by the Director of PA.

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS:

MEDIA RESPONSE DATABASE: A media response database is maintained in the P Drive. **All personnel** are to ensure that any updated information that is received is stored in the database and that any out-of-date information is removed.

Documenting Planned Interviews: Media Operations staff will add all planned interviews to a calendar. Check the calendar daily to update any changes so it is current for each day's CUA brief and for leadership's situational awareness. (determine what system to use)

Media Embed Tracker: The Embed team will produce weekly a report showing which media (outlet, personnel, number of people) are currently as well as planned to embed in each RC.

MEDIA OPS LOGBOOK: The designated PAO in the CJOC will maintain a log book of calls, including outstanding queries.

MEDIA EVENTS BOARD: The events board in the CJOC must be maintained by the shift workers with accurate and up-to-date info.

Daily Diary: The **night shift** is responsible for producing the daily diary for PAO Director and the diary for daily meetings.

BIOGRAPHIES AND CONTACT PHONE NUMBERS

On the wise web is a list of all ISAF internal numbers or follow the link at the beginning of this guide for our office and RC numbers and POC.

All General Officers' CV's/Bio's are on the wise web.

Routine Meetings and Reports
CJOC Shift Change Brief: Daily at TBD – all personnel should be able to brief the day's significant media activities.
IJC PA Director's Meeting: Daily at TBD – includes all staff directors.
SHAPE conf call (Media Ops Office): Daily at 1100 Afghanistan time.
OSD PAO Conference Call: Weekdays at 1630 Afghanistan time. The call addresses near-term PA issues, specifically the day's top headlines (or what OSD should expect questions about during their day), significant IJC media engagements and queries, and any upcoming Pentagon Press Conferences. Dial 312-236-0001, press 1, dial 1-866-222-9044, enter 05830#, to enter the conference. LTC Mark Wright and Maj Shawn Turner, both reachable via 318-227-5131, are your POCs should you be unable to connect or have to miss the call; I send a brief email to LTC Wright, Maj Turner and LTC Kloppel at CENTCOM when I need to miss the call. (mark.wright@osd.mil; shawn.turner@osd.mil; kloppejd@centcom.mil)
US PAO meeting: weekly at the US Embassy for PA and IO personnel from the Embassy, USAID, ISAF, USFOR, CSTC-A, at 1400 each Sunday. The meeting provides a forum in which to

synchronize US Public Affairs efforts in Afghanistan and focuses on events within the upcoming two weeks. MSG Reeder in IO (Seattle Conf Room) usually walks over with me; you can attend Sunday to meet everyone and see the event, or MSG Reeder can take you on May 18.

i.   The PA Director provides USFOR-A inputs to CENTCOM in a **weekly CENTCOM report**. Plans compiles this report Thursday evening and Friday morning. Press Ops provides the following to Plans for inclusion in the report (submitted over SIPR e-mail by COB Thursday):

1.   Events (interviews, trips) that took place over the previous 7 days as well as what
2.   events are scheduled for the next 7 days.
3.   Who will interview the GOs in the coming week, as well as who is on the schedule for the Pentagon Press Corp briefing.
4.   A brief statement (2-3 sentences) about any significant events, issues, or coverage that occurred in the previous week, but again no more than a few items at most (there's usually one or two).

Commander Operational Press Briefs   Press Ops coordinates weekly Key Leader Updates to DC. Schedule dependent. Each week a senior leader from one of our units speaks with the Pentagon Press Corps via DVIDS. We monitor other units' direct engagement with POCs in DC, unless one of our generals is speaking, in which case we set up the interview, schedule the DVIDS and studio time locally, as well as prep the speaker.

MOD Press Conference: Weekly each Wednesday at 1000 – IJC will participate as needed.
VTC with RC PAOs and NTM-A PAO: Weekly on Saturday at 1600 – opportunity to coordinate with all regional PAOs.

PHONE NUMBERS AND DIALING INSTRUCTIONS

Dialing Out To dial out a commercial Afghan number, dial 88 from a DSN phone, followed by the 10-digit number, or dial 60 from an IVSN phone, followed by the 10-digit number.

International Calling Calling from the DSN or IVSN phones, but can use the PA Director's cell phone to return calls if necessary.

Useful PAO Contacts:
HQ ISAF PAO: COL Shanks, 686-2919/2928, DSN 237-0995/1110, VOSIP, 237-1105
HQ ISAF PA: Commercial to IVSN, 0799 51 2919 or 0799 51 2928
ISAF Spokesman's Office (HQ ISAF, Kabul): BG Trembley, or Maj Gaudet: IVSN 686-1183
ISAF Multi-purpose PA Team (HQ ISAF, Kabul): LCDR Walton: IVSN 686-2466
RC-North:
RC-South:
RC-West:
RC-Capital:
RC-East (CJTF82) (Bagram Airfield): LTC Counts DSN 431-4030, comm 0799 063 013
TF 373 (Bagram Airfield): LTC Edgecomb or MSgt Houlihan: VOSIP 431-6821
CFSOCC (New Kabul Compound. Kabul): LTC Williams: DSN 237-1741 CJSOTF-A (Bagram Airfield): Maj Ortiz: VOSIP 431-6740
CSTC-A (Camp Eggers, Kabul): LTC Hylton, LT Laborde, Mr. House, or TSgt Gyokeres (pron. Jokers): DSN 237-3633, comm 0700 688 578
US Embassy (Embassy, Kabul): Fleur Cowan: comm 0799 722 136
USAID (Kabul): Julie Fossler: comm 0799 794 674 Army Corps of Engineers/Afghan Engineering District (Kabul): Bruce Huffman: DSN 312-265-2984

MEDIA EMBED TEAM RESPONSIBILITIES:

Media Embeds and Accreditation: The Media Embed Team is responsible for all embed and accreditation actions for the IJC. Media embedding with the RCs or NTM-A will be handled by their respective PA staffs. We are in the process of creating one accreditation process for all of ISAF.

Media embeds are the responsibility of each RC and NTM-A. The IJC MOC will coordinate requests it receives by determining which unit RC is appropriate to the request and forwarding the request down range.

Media Embeds

The job of arranging media embeds for international and U.S. media is lengthy. It takes approximately 14-21 days to receive approval for embed. The MOC serves as a liaison between the media and the RCs.

The IJC MOC is responsible for registering all media upon that arrive in Kabul unless the media are booked on a flight and will depart quickly for one of the RCs. In order to receive an ISAF media badge embeds must sign the ground rules and hold harmless agreements. The MOC is responsible for keeping the ground rules current and updating as needed. If journalists are already registered on arrival they should resign the ground rules if they have changed since their last visit

Media are not approved until the RC has coordinated the request with affected units and notified the IJC MOC that they can support the request. Media are highly recommended not to arrange travel to Afghanistan until they receive approval to embed.

Transportation and Lodging

The start and stop point of all media embeds is Kabul International Airport (KAIA). Media are responsible for getting themselves to and from KAIA by commercial means or military if embedding with a unit en route to the AOR or traveling to Afghanistan from another military location such as Kuwait or Kyrgyzstan.

The MOC is responsible for providing approved media with the necessary directions for arrival at KAIA as well as all aspects of media transportation and lodging while they are at KAIA.

Specifics to include:

Transportation at KAIA after arrival at South KAIA (commercial side) or North KAIA.

Billeting Arrangements

Space block procedures for milair flights out of KAIA to the RCs.

Media should allow 3-4 days on each end of their embed for transportation. In the winter, 5-6 days should be allotted. The same number of days should also be allotted for embeds moving in between task forces or to other AOs.

EMBED REQUEST PROCEDURES (step by step):

ACCREDITATION PROCEDURES (step by step):

Linguists

Media Operations is assigned 3 linguists. The linguists do not just translate they also serve as cultural advisors and are a key component of working with local Afghan media. They translate press releases, press kits, briefings, and any materials needed. They also translate for media events and interviews between the Afghan media and general officers.

Common tasks include:

Shift Hours: The ISAF Joint Command Media Ops Center in the CJOC is manned 24/7. Additional members will perform duties in the PA offices.

Standard Duty Shifts are:

CJOC and Embed Personnel:
Early shift – 0600-1800 (may adjust depending on CUA timing)
Late Shift – 1800-0600

All other personnel will report by 0800 (unless otherwise directed).

Logistics: All office personnel need to be trained as driver or as passenger to assist with driving duties. This is especially true for the Media Embed Team.

HEADQUARTERS ISAF PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE, DELEGATION OF RELEASE AUTHORITY – STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

SITUATION

1.   The current rules and procedures governing release authority for news and feature releases, media advisories and operational updates are inadequate. The procedures in place are overly restrictive and not conducive to timely and effective media engagement.

CURRENT PROCEDURES

2.   Currently all ISAF News Releases are released into the public domain through the HQ ISAF PAO. This can cause a delay in the release of information, which in some cases can allow the INS to gain an advantage in the information operations environment.

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3.   In order to increase the responsiveness within the public affairs operation it is vital that our processes and procedures allow all areas of ISAF PA to react in a timely and effective manner. The aim of this SOP is to give all international military in Afghanistan direction and guidance on new procedures which are to be adopted regarding release authority.

DIRECTION AND GUIDANCE

4.   The following direction and guidance regarding news releases will be adopted by all International military organisations in Afghanistan:

a.   Authority to release news and feature releases, media advisories and operational updates is delegated to all RC Chief PAOs and through them down to individual Task Force PAOs (noting exceptions listed in para b). Releases are to be disseminated by all available means into the public domain. All releases are to be forwarded to the ISAF PAO Press Office email account (pressoffice@hq.isaf.nato.int) prior to actual release for situational awareness and potential coordination. RC PAOs will maintain records of all news releases and send weekly SITREPS by COB each Thursday to the HQ ISAF PAO Press Office using the format that can be found at attachment 1.

b.   HQ ISAF PAO retains release authority for the following operationally sensitive subject areas:

(1)   Death or injuries to ISAF troops.

(2)   Any Civilian Casualty event.

(3)   Catastrophic operational failure (e.g. enemy closure of an airfield).

(4)   Events with wider intra/inter theatre implications (Elections, NATO policies, TCN policies etc).

c.   All releases regardless of RC or nationality are to reflect the corporate image of ISAF and lead with ANSF/GIROA contribution wherever possible. Further guidance on the specific requirement of the construct of releases is contained in attachment 2.

Attachments:

1.   News Release Weekly SITREP
2.   Additional guidance and News Release example

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REGIONAL COMMAND SOUTH (RC (S))NEWS RELEASE WEEKLY SITREP

1.   The following News Releases have been issued by this RC PAO during the week 24-31 July 2009.

Ser	Date of Release	Title of Release	Reference Number	Remarks
(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)
1	23/07/09	NR-ISAF Assist in School Construction	2009-08-RC-S-CA-513	Authority from RC (S) CPAO

2.   *Points to note:*
        a.   Reference number must have the prefix of the RC that released the release.
        b.   The Release must refer to the ISAF website in the guidance box at the bottom of the release.
        c.   Contact details of both the RC and ISAF PAO must be included as a footnote at the bottom of the release
        d.   The current ISAF format for News Releases must be used by all RC PAO.

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NEWS RELEASE
International Security Assistance Force - Afghanistan

Committed to the security, reconstruction and extension of governance in Afghanistan

2009-MM- RC/X/XX/XXX

Title

Kabul, Afghanistan (Month, Day) – Text

Note:

1. NATO branding to be replaced by relevant RC branding as required (ISAF branding to remain)

2. Relevant RC (N,S,E,W,C) added to Release Number line, see file naming below.

3. Kabul – to be replaced by RC location i.e. Kandahar

4. File naming should include:

   Year-Month-RC-(N, S, E, W, C)-Category definition-your release number

   Category Definitions:
   AO – ANSF Ops
   AR – Afghan resistance
   CC – Civilian Casualties
   CA – Coalition Activity
   CR – Criminal Activity
   ED – Economic development
   E – Elections/Voter Registration
   GC – Government Corruption
   GE – Government Effectiveness
   HC – Humanitarian Crisis
   IA – Insurgent Activity
   IB – Insurgent Brutality
   IE – International Efforts
   N – Narcotics
   RS – Regional Stability
   SD – Social development
   TU – Troop uplift
   M - Miscellaneous

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- ends -

Notes for Editors

1.   More information on the International Security Assisstance Force can be found <u>here</u>

2.   Broadcast quality video of iSAF operations can be downloaded here and at <u>www.natochannel.tv</u>

3.   The latest high resolution stills can be downloaded for news purposes <u>here</u>

4.