

Unit Introduction

Public affairs activities in the United States involve many complex functions based on missions, public affairs expertise and the socio-political environment. Shifting public affairs programs and people overseas involves much more than a simple relocation. There are fundamental differences in overseas command channels.

In this unit, we will discuss both the emphasis and objectives of the three public affairs functional areas you will encounter. There are many cultural and political considerations that affect the public affairs functions overseas. These considerations are of paramount importance if public affairs tasks are to be effectively accomplished.



Unit Introduction

We're going to examine "host nation sensitivities," sources for overseas guidance, the PAO's relationship with the U.S. Embassy, responsibilities regarding internal information, and factors in handling media and community relations. Some challenges you face overseas you will never encounter working in the continental United States (CONUS).



Objective

Compare and contrast public affairs operations overseas with public affairs operations in the continental United States.

Unit Overview

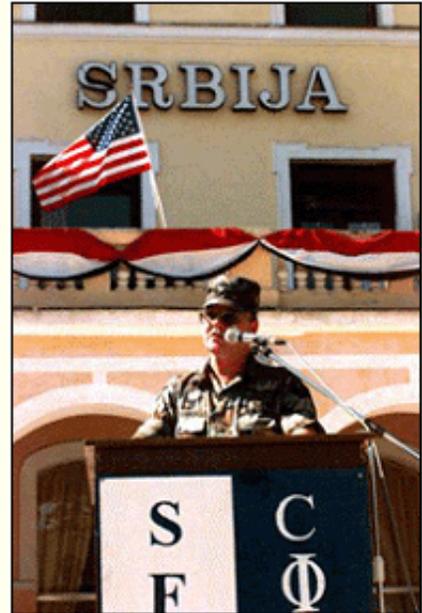
In this unit we will:

- Examine host-nation sensitivities
- Discuss sources of Public Affairs Guidance (PAG) overseas
- Describe how embassies are a resource
- Explain differences in conduct of overseas internal information, external information and community relations programs compared to their conduct in CONUS
- Explain the four tenets that guide U.S. armed forces in multinational cooperative activities

At the end of this unit you will have a better understanding of how military PAOs work with foreign nationals and in foreign countries.

Host Nation Sensitivities

When overseas, as members of the U.S. military community, we must remember that we are guests in these other countries. As guests, we must follow the rules of our hosts. We call these rules host nation sensitivities, and group them into nine separate, but often overlapping categories.



Host Nation Sensitivity

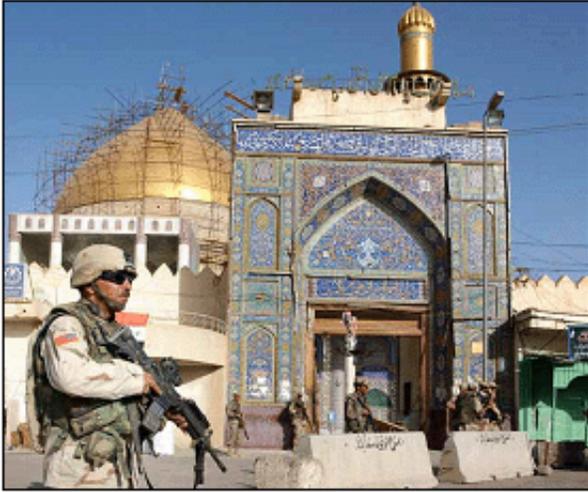


1. Language: This covers verbal and non-verbal communication. The English lexicographer Samuel Johnson said, "Languages are the pedigrees of nations." Once you leave the United States, it is chauvinistic to expect citizens of another country to speak American English or to use American gestures. We must learn to communicate in their language, even if it is just a few useful phrases.

2. Culture: Webster's defines culture as "the concepts, habits, skills, art, instruments, institutions, etc., of a given people in a given

period. Civilization." We must be respectful of other cultures and not compare it unfavorably to ours because they differ from what we are accustomed to back in the United States.

Host Nation Sensitivity



3. Religion: We must respect the right of people to practice religions different from our own. In many countries, religion has a great impact on their culture, political systems, social values, history and laws.

4. Political Systems: Most countries have a different political system from our federal republic such as a monarchy, aristocracy, dictatorial, parliamentary, republic, socialist etc. You should know and understand how the host nation's government operates.

Host Nation Sensitivity

5. Social Values: This is a nation's perspective on life. Many times, the social values of a country can be determined by examining its laws. For example, in Germany, drinking beer is a social event; therefore, the official drinking age is 15 years old for beer and 18 years old for spirits.

6. Economics: For military members overseas, the number one economic consideration is the exchange rate of American dollars to foreign currency. Another consideration is the economic state of the host country, which will effect the exchange rate.



Host Nation Sensitivity



7. History: Most citizens of any nation are familiar with their country's history. We also should be aware of the contacts the United States has had with the host nation.

8. Law: Just as the United States has its own laws, each country also has its own legal codes. Different legal standards can lead members of the U.S. military community into legal troubles with the host nation. Status of Forces Agreements (SOFAs) explain the rights of service members accused of a crime. American civilians, including military family members, are subject to the host nation's laws at all times.

Host Nation Sensitivity



9. Geography: Where is the country? What are its borders, its neighbors and its geological attributes? Geography affects the culture, politics, economics, and history of a country. Author Robert Penn Warren said, "History is all explained by geography." The British way of life is different from the Polish in part because of their locations.

Sources of Public Affairs Guidance Overseas

There are several guidelines that govern policies that public affairs practitioners need to understand. The first of these is the overseas command structure. Four main sources of PA guidance overseas are:

The Unified Command generally disseminates guidelines in broad policy matters and some community relations. There are nine Unified Commands around the world. They are: U.S. Northern Command, U.S. Pacific Command, U.S. Southern Command, U.S. Central Command, U.S. European Command, U.S. Joint Forces Command, U.S. Special Operations Command, U.S. Transportation Command, and U.S. Strategic Command.

The Service Command is where you'll get most of your PA guidance. The command provides service unique policies, plans and materials.

Combined Commands offer guidance applicable during combined operations with host country or other allied nations' public affairs staffs. You'll most often deal with combined commands during exercises. Despite them "just" being exercises, keep in mind that any coordination problems and communication barriers will make them quite a challenge. Also, there may be considerable media and political interests in the exercise. So prepare for them as early as possible. An example would be the "Partnership for Peace" initiative that teams former members of the Eastern Block with U.S. and NATO forces.

Country Team provides ambassadorial controls on program implementation and information release.

Military PAOs and the U.S. Embassy

All public affairs programs affecting the host nation must be coordinated with the embassy. The U.S. ambassador is the highest-ranking U.S. official in any foreign country with which the United States has diplomatic ties. If there is a conflict between embassy and military guidance, the senior military commander will need to resolve the issue.

Embassy Functions

The ambassador's staff is normally called the country team and consists of the following positions:

- Ambassador (senior U.S. official)
- Deputy Chief of Mission
- Defense Attaché
- Consular Officers (Ministers)
 - Commercial, Economic & Financial Affairs
 - Agricultural Affairs
 - Labor Affairs
 - Intelligence
 - Political Affairs
 - Administration
 - Public Affairs/Information



Embassy Functions

While the ambassador is the embassy's senior decision-maker, the day-to-day operational management of the embassy usually falls to the deputy chief of mission.

Most embassies have a defense attaché who is the ambassador's military liaison and resident U.S. military expert.

The State Department also gives the ambassador a number of consular officers to represent U.S. interests in that country.

- **Commerce & Economics** helps American business interests
- **Agricultural Affairs** aids in the export and import of U.S. agricultural products
- **Labor Affairs** promotes U.S. labor policies and keep tabs on local labor laws
- **Intelligence** stays abreast of the threats and suspicious activity within the host country
- **Political Affairs** monitors the political developments in the country and their potential impact on U.S. interests
- **Basic Administration Staff** tracks and maintains embassy operations
- **Public Affairs or Public Information** provides embassy media support

Embassy Functions



The State Department controls each embassy's activities around the world through a document known as the Country Plan. Among other things, this plan describes the coordination requirements for both routine and emergency information activities within the country. The actual amount of control exercised by the country team varies widely. In some countries the team control is strong and pervasive. In others, control is much less stringent.

Embassy Functions

In a host country, an embassy's public diplomacy staff:

- Explains and advocates U.S. policies in terms that are credible and meaningful in foreign cultures
- Provides information about the United States, its people, values and institutions
- Builds lasting relationships & mutual understanding through the exchange of people and ideas
- Advises on foreign attitudes and their implications for U.S. policies

Public Diplomacy seeks to promote the national interest of the United States in a foreign country through understanding, informing and influencing foreign audiences. **Public affairs** differs as it **provides information** to the public, press and other institutions concerning the goals, policies and activities of the U.S. Government.

Public affairs seeks to foster understanding of these goals through dialogue with individual citizens and other groups and institutions, and domestic and international media. However, the aim of public affairs is to inform the domestic audience.

The public affairs staff should be your point of contact for all matters involving the host nation's media, internal information and community relations.

Embassy Functions



There will be times when the embassy will be the lead agency for certain operations. The military will have to work through them to disseminate information about what you are doing. You need to be familiar with how the State Department disseminates information in a host country. Here is a list of how they do that:

- Establishing close personal contacts with host nation leaders

- Using electronic and printed media (e.g. Voice of America)

- Establishing foreign press centers (New York City, Los Angeles, Washington D.C.)

- 200 State Department public affairs field posts in 140 nations

Working with the embassy is a good way for you to get contacts with host-nation civic, elected and opinion leaders. They also have established contacts with host-nation and stateside media outlets. They can be a resource to help credential foreign press. They also maintain a speakers bureau and more 100 information resource centers for the electronic retrieval of information for use by governments, media and educators.

Internal Information Overseas

Internal information programs are especially important overseas because there are fewer sources of American-oriented information available. Our overseas internal information programs must keep troops informed in the overseas environment. Internal information programs are vital for protecting troops making sure they are aware of local laws (Status of Forces Agreement - SOFA). Military broadcasters serve a very vital role at most overseas locations.



Internal Information Overseas



Armed Forces Radio and Television Services (AFRTS) and Stars & Stripes newspapers are major sources of information for the military audience. These sources cover large portions of the unified command's area so they must be supplemented at the military community level with installation newspapers, local AFRTS stations' news programming, face-to-face communications and newcomer orientation programs.

Internal Information Overseas

One important area of information for our internal audience involves host-nation sensitivities, especially its laws, regulations, and customs. Lack of knowledge or respect for local culture and law often gets military community members into legal trouble.

Everyone in the military community is an unofficial ambassador for the United States, so our behavior must be beyond reproach. DOD personnel's off-post behavior must adhere to the highest standards.

Another important goal is to dispel the ignorance or apprehension members of the military community often have about the community outside the front gate. We strive to educate them about their new home and encourage them to participate in life outside the front gate.



Internal Information Overseas



The last item we need to consider when discussing internal information overseas is, "Who exactly is the audience for our internal information?" Local national employees are part of our internal audience overseas.

In countries such as Germany and Japan, the people who live near our installations often become part of our television and radio audience, even though they may have no connection with the U.S. military. This is because the host countries assign television signals and radio frequencies to the AFRTS stations that the local citizens can also receive on their equipment.

We call this foreign audience a **shadow audience**. You must consider them as part of your audience when planning internal information programs.

Internal Information Tools Available Overseas

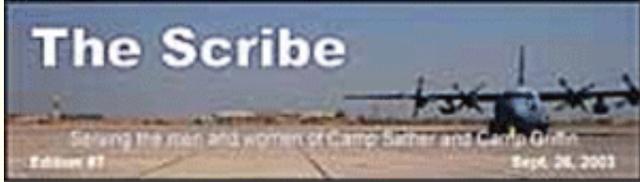
You can reach your overseas internal audiences in the same ways that you reach them in CONUS. The same mediums are available to you overseas as in the states; however, keep in mind the shadow audience. There are several tools available for communication with the military community overseas.



AFRTS: Local American Forces Radio and Television Service outlets provide internal information, along with U.S. national news and entertainment to military audiences overseas.

Installation or Unit Newspapers:

Run in-depth stories on host nation events, history and culture, in addition to military information. To the right is "The Scribe," a military newspaper produced out of Baghdad.



The Scribe
Serving the men and women of Camp Sather and Camp Griffin
Edition #7
Sept. 26, 2003

Inside This Week...
Top III Lounge opens
About 20 Camp Sather women have packed to visit the week-end to set up the Top III Lounge. The Lounge offers women a quiet place to read, study or drink a cup of coffee with friends. For more details see article on page 3.

DDO reconsiders force
In the wake of the 9/11 terrorist attacks, the Department of Defense has had to re-examine its military force structure. DOD officials are now looking to reduce active duty and reserve forces. For more details see article on page 4.

Members of the 47th Air Expeditionary Group pose with comedian Drew Carey during his Baghdad International Airport visit. Carey is the headline event at Saturday's USO concert at the Army's Hanger #1.

USO brings in Drew Carey
Compiled from staff reports

Comedian Drew Carey will be the headline performer during a USO tour at the airport. The service will pick up Camp Sather residents at host of the fashion ball events at 7 p.m., 8 p.m. and 1 p.m.

Internal Information Tools Available Overseas

Face-to-face: This tool uses chain of command (captain's/commander's call, morning muster or formations) or briefings to put out current information on the host nation. This is the only secure way to distribute sensitive information to the American military community members.

Orientation Programs: Introductory programs often include language and culture classes. These programs are often mandatory for service members new to the area.

Stars & Stripes: This is the "hometown newspaper" overseas. European and Pacific editions provide regional and international news coverage.



Internet: Web sites provide news and information about your command. The local community may have access to them, as well.

External Information Overseas

"Everything you do reflects upon our country wherever you are deployed. You are not just soldiers, sailors, airmen and Marines, you also are ambassadors, and you have to keep that in mind. You do 100 good deeds and you will get credit for it.

"On the other hand, all you have to have is one bad deed and that makes the headline news, and changes people's perceptions."

-Former U.S. Secretary of Defense William Cohen

External Information Overseas

The greatest challenge for public affairs officers overseas will be dealing with the potential impact of negative incidents. These situations require reactive public affairs. However, having a good emergency and crisis response plan, and working closely with the embassy to handle these incidents as tactfully as possible, will mitigate foreign perceptions of the military.



External Information Overseas



The most important factor to consider when conducting external information overseas is host-nation sensitivities. External information, whether it involves media releases or community relations programs, can only be effective if we consider host-nation perspectives. This is where the embassy is of great help to us, because it has staff PAOs in the host country.

External Information Overseas

Coordinate all external information with the U.S. Information Service. Foreign press outlets are often advocacy-oriented, which means they slant news to the organization's political or other interests.

Local English-language newspapers may have different news from the local-language newspapers. It is helpful to have a language-qualified service member or the U.S. Information Services representative summarize local news for you.



PA's Role in Overseas Community Relations Programs



Because each country is different, there are few hard and fast rules about community relations overseas (known as civic affairs). You may have to realign community relations to fit overseas functions.

Whatever the country, there are two things to remember:

- the local citizens are interested in what we do
- we must coordinate our programs with the embassy.

Overseas Community Relations Programs (Civic Affairs)

When doing community relations activities, critical elements must be coordinated with the embassy. Seeking assistance from local national employees provides continuity and allows you to "put your thumb on the pulse" of activities.



Overseas Civic Programs



Local national employees who work in the PA office can be a valuable resource. Their insights can help you "take the pulse" of the local community. Community Relations programs can take place both on or off base.

The commander will have official relations with the decision makers in the local community. The military organization may have other offices, such as civil affairs, tasked with aiding the commander in developing and maintaining these contacts.

Overseas Civic Programs

Members of the military community overseas should be encouraged to interact with residents of the host country.

Most people love festivals, so they represent a great opportunity for cultural exchanges. For example, Fourth of July is a good time to have an open house and let the local citizens get a taste (literally) of American culture. The local citizens usually return the favor by inviting us to view or participate in their festivals. Music comes close to being a universal language, and local citizens love hearing U.S. military bands play in their communities. Pictured: the U.S. Air Force participates in an air show in Africa.



Overseas Civic Programs

For U.S. military community members who want to make friends with local citizens, there are organizations such as the Kontakt Klub in Germany. Other groups offer holiday programs in which service members spend the holidays with local families. These programs provide Americans the opportunity to get to know the local citizens.



off-duty time.

Also, units overseas often adopt orphanages or senior citizens' homes. Such initiatives allow service members the chance to spend time with children or seniors.

Schools and youth groups, such as the Boy and Girl Scouts, like to have sister units out in the local community. The children get together both on and off base for a wide variety of programs. Pictured left, an Air Force sergeant teaches English to Japanese students in Okinawa in his

Four Tenets

All U.S. forces commanders participating in multinational operations play key roles in foreign relations. They are military leaders who require acute skills in political sensitivity for the host-nation. They must build relationships that promote effective multinational cooperative action. The DOD has developed "Four Tenets" of multinational cooperative activities to guide the U.S. Armed Forces:

- **RESPECT:** This includes respect for each partner's culture, religion, customs, history, and values.
- **RAPPORT:** Build a personal direct relationship. Commanders must establish the environment and set the example for developing rapport among subordinate commanders, staffs, and individual members of U.S. commands.
- **PATIENCE:** U.S. commanders at all levels must lead, setting the example of untiring and even-handed patience, focusing on eliciting the best possible performance from the integration of U.S. and multinational partners' forces.
- **KNOWLEDGE OF PARTNERS:** U.S. commanders must devote the time and resources to know and understand their comrades in arms. This effort is as important to success as the effort to understand the adversary.

Understanding your boss' role in multinational efforts will enable you to help him/her conduct effective public affairs abroad.

Unit Summary



Cultivating an appreciation for host-nation customs, traditions, and laws will continue to pay dividends in our daily and long-term relations with local citizens. Service members far from home will depend almost exclusively on our efforts to keep them informed and connected with the news and events stateside. Your role as a practitioner becomes even more important during an overseas assignment.