

Personnel Recovery Operations and the Media



COL Gary L. Keck
Director, Defense Press Office



Panel Members

- COL Gary L. Keck
Director DoD Press Office
- CAPT Hal Pittman
VCJCS PAO
- Mr. Ken McGraw
Deputy PAO - SOCOM



Overview

- Advantages and Disadvantages (Media)
- Principles of Communication
- Planning Ahead
- Early decisions are key
- Establish Release Authority
- Coordinate Message



Advantages of Media

- Reach (mass communication)
- Speed of communication
- Visibility
- Assist in communicating internal message
- Quells rumors / interrupts cycle before they become questions
- Shows proactive approach of USG and DoD



Disadvantages of Media

- Alerts the enemy
- Lack of Control
- Provides operational information
- Seek information
- Enhance image of enemy
- Intended message may not be received



Communication Principles

- Timely and accurate information
- Info should be made fully and readily available
- Encourage the free flow of general and military info
- Info will not be unnecessarily classified
- Withheld only to protect operational security
- no place for Propaganda
- Show compassion



Planning Ahead

- Operational implications of media
 - Plan for use / non use

- Have a shell communications plan ready
 - Not approved, but ready to use.

- PAG (public affairs guidance)
 - Format & content based on need
 - Local impact/issue
 - Rigid format & content



Plan for Spokespersons

- Establish/ pre-plan for public speakers
 - Commanders / Civilian Leaders
 - Staff members / SME
 - Subordinate commands / Offices
 - Public Affairs staff
 - Higher headquarters / Offices
 - Troops / workforce
 - Families



Early Decisions are Critical

- Share the maximum amount of info possible as early as possible with leadership and the interagency
- Have a purpose for communication efforts
- No news is...
 - Set the conditions for success
- Who's in charge
 - Establish a battle rhythm
- Avoid the Congressional questions – get OLA involved
- Set milestones quickly for message dissemination
- Encourage feedback

Message Coordination & Dissemination



- Higher
- Subordinates
- Staffs
 - J-staff
 - Legal
 - Community services
 - Chaplain
- Interagency
- Congress



Considerations

- Guidelines for release
- Nature of news
 - Timeliness
- Strategic Communication Planning
 - Identify Audiences
 - Active or Passive
- Effective Command Messages
- Mutually supporting functional areas
- Protect sensitive information (names)



Questions?