



ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE  
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WASHINGTON, DC 20301-1400

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PUBLIC AFFAIRS

MEMORANDUM FOR SECRETARIES OF THE MILITARY DEPARTMENTS  
CHAIRMAN OF THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF  
UNDER SECRETARIES OF DEFENSE  
COMMANDERS OF THE COMBATANT COMMANDS  
ASSISTANT SECRETARIES OF DEFENSE  
GENERAL COUNSEL OF THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE  
ASSISTANTS TO THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE  
DIRECTOR, ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT

SUBJ: UPDATE: INTERACTION WITH OSD/PA ON RELEASE OF OFFICIAL  
INFORMATION

Over the course of the past two months, my office has been working with OSD components, military services and combatant commands to implement the guidance provided in the Secretary's July 2 memorandum regarding release of official information to the media and to the public.

OSD/PA's approach is framed by the Secretary's strong feelings that the media is not the enemy, and that the Department's approach to media relations must be as straightforward and cooperative as possible. Implementation of the Secretary's guidance is not a change of policy but a reaffirmation of existing policy.

In reaffirming that policy and our intent to provide timely and accurate information to the media, my office has been working and will continue to work with you and your staffs to make every effort to ensure that:

- Personal views are not equated with or published as official government positions
- Information provided to the media and to the public is accurate, timely and in proper context.
- My office is made aware of significant reports and other documents, including on sensitive subjects, that are routinely provided to the press and to Congress
- Those who provide classified or sensitive, pre-decisional information to the press without authorization understand that they will be held accountable
- My office reinforces and/or establishes working relationships with your offices to ensure that together we are able to respond to press requests for interviews and information as quickly and as accurately as possible – and, in the process of doing so, that we can identify and remove obstacles to achieving those objectives.



The longstanding channels of communication and coordination between OSD/PA and the Military Services, the Joint Staff and the Combatant Commands have been the Service, Joint Staff and COCOM offices of public affairs (PA). My staff coordinates with the PA staffs at the Combatant Commands, the Service headquarters and the Chairman's office. These PA personnel routinely do an outstanding job of coordinating and informing us about significant media interviews and public speaking engagements.

But they can only coordinate what they are being told about or know about. All of our PA communicators must be empowered to use their professional experience and expertise to do what they have long been required to do under current policy: ensure that classified/sensitive information is protected; assist those who speak on behalf of the Department in public forums to have full situational awareness as they prepare and deliver their remarks; and ensure that the same situational awareness exists within and across the Department --including my office -- regarding all significant media engagements.

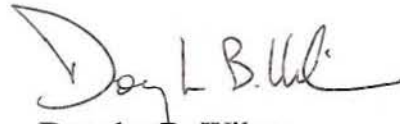
Based on the input my office has received over the past two months, I am asking the heads of the Military Services, the Joint Staff and the Combatant Commands to reinforce to all of their employees to work closely and effectively with their public affairs offices to ensure full situational awareness -- and to ensure that all employees under their commands do the same with regard to dissemination of information and implementation of the guidance provided in the Secretary's July 2 memo. In addition, my office will continue to arrange implementation briefings regarding the information and working relationships necessary to reinforce and improve upon our ongoing coordination processes.

My office also provides support for the Offices of the Secretary of Defense, the Deputy Secretary of Defense, the Office of the General Counsel and the Undersecretaries and Assistant Secretaries of Defense. My staff has longstanding and ongoing supportive working relationships with all of those components. As a result of input my office has sought and received this summer, my leadership team and I will be meeting later this month with each of the five undersecretaries; with the deputy and assistant undersecretaries and assistant secretaries who report to them; and with the General Counsel, the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Legislative Affairs, the Executive Secretary and the Director of Administration and Management to strengthen joint coordination procedures regarding the release of information, within the framework outlined by the Secretary's guidance memo.

We will provide relevant additional and updated guidance following our meetings with the leaders of OSD components, military services and combatant commands.

In assisting all of you to implement existing policy (and the Secretary's guidelines reinforcing that policy), I understand and take full responsibility for ensuring that all of us in OSD/PA do everything in our power to meet your expectations -- and the expectations of the media representatives with whom we work on a daily basis -- regarding smooth coordination and timely and accurate response to media and public requests.

I look forward to a continuing dialogue with you and with members of the news media, and hope you will not hesitate to contact me or my office with any questions you may have.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Douglas B. Wilson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "D" and a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Douglas B. Wilson  
Assistant Secretary of Defense  
for Public Affairs

cc:  
Secretary of Defense  
Deputy Secretary of Defense