



**OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE  
1400 DEFENSE PENTAGON  
WASHINGTON, DC 20301-1400**

**PUBLIC AFFAIRS**

**6 December 2001**

**TO: Bureau Chiefs**  
**FROM: Victoria Clarke**  
**CC: RADM Craig Quigley**  
**SUBJECT: Media Coverage Issues**

We owe you an apology. The last several days have revealed severe shortcomings in our preparedness to support news organizations in their efforts to cover U.S. military operations in Afghanistan.

We have a significant responsibility to provide your correspondents the opportunity to cover the war. It is a responsibility that we take seriously. Our policy remains the same as it always has been: Keeping in mind our desire to protect operational security and the safety of men and women in uniform, we intend to provide maximum media coverage with minimal delay and hassle. That has not always been the case over the last few days, particularly with regard to the coverage of dead and wounded returning to the Forward Operating Base known as Rhino.

The following are actions we have taken and will take to address our responsibilities and your concerns:

- I have assigned an officer to work out of our Bahrain office whose full-time job is to stay on top of the logistics support for media ashore. Airplane flights into and out of Afghanistan; staying in touch with news organization representatives on changes; keeping the master list of who wishes to go into Afghanistan – all of it. Major Robert Winchester can be reached in Bahrain at 973-724-561/027.



- We have decided we need more senior, more experienced PAOs on the ground in Afghanistan who can better handle the challenges. These officers will also facilitate access, filing, communication with higher headquarters – all of it. They will be stationed at Bagram Airfield, Mazar-e Sharif and Rhino within the next week. We will provide you their names and contact information as soon as possible.
- We have stationed three military PAOs at Bagram, and three are enroute to Mazar-e Sharif, that are able to provide filing and access support to your efforts from within the country. We believe improving the communication and manning of our press centers at Bagram Airfield and Mazar-e Sharif will provide better and faster access to our troops there.
- Today, we reissued public affairs guidance to all our subordinate commands so that everyone understands Secretary Rumsfeld's and General Franks' intent – maximum coverage, minimum hassle.
- As ever, our primary goal is longer duration, larger numbers and unilateral filing status for news organizations covering the military action in Afghanistan. We remain committed to achieving that goal.

The road ahead will not be easy. While we cannot do everything you might want in covering this most unconventional of wars, we can guarantee one thing: we will keep the lines of communication with you open at all times to address these and other issues.



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**MEMORANDUM FOR: News Media Bureau Chiefs**

**SUBJECT: Selection for Secretary of Defense Trips**

The attached documents outline the procedures and policies by which OSD (PA) will select media to travel with the Secretary of Defense.

Individual correspondents, bureau chiefs and DOD public affairs officials contributed significantly to the development of this process with their advice and recommendations. These decisions are based largely on their input. Additional criteria that weighed heavily in reaching these decisions include:

- Size and scope of news organizations
- Commitment to on-going coverage of the Pentagon
- Representation of DOD's diverse audiences

These criteria, admittedly, contain quantitative and qualitative considerations. Simply selecting the largest media organizations every time would ignore outlets that reach diverse and important constituencies. Although we will not make everyone happy, we do think this system provides a balanced and predictable method for selection of the Secretary's traveling press contingent.

Victoria Clarke  
Assistant Secretary of Defense  
for Public Affairs

Attachments

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## **Selection Procedures for Secretary of Defense Traveling Press**

- 1. Selection Criteria:** The selection of news media accompanying the Secretary of Defense on trips is based on a number of criteria, but the driving factor in how many members of the media are allowed to actually travel with the Secretary is the size of the plane assigned to the trip and the number of seats allocated to Public Affairs. We will always try to accommodate as many members of the media, representing as many disciplines in the media as possible.
  
- 2. Media Categories:** We will consider media in the following categories when considering and selecting specific travelers. The OASD(PA) Press Operations office will be responsible for establishing and maintaining appropriate rotating travel rosters:
  - Wire Services (AP, Reuters, AFP. Others on a rotating basis)
  
  - Electronic Media (TV)
  
  - Electronic Media (Radio)
  
  - Large newspaper/news service/magazines – those organizations with audited circulations of at least 500,000 which cover the Pentagon on a regular basis.
  
  - Small newspaper/news service/magazines – all organizations not covered in the large category.
  
  - Photo (and all others not covered above)

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3. **Selection Criteria:** Assume a seat allocation of 13. Pool rules do not necessarily apply in this situation and should be addressed in the planning stages of each trip. In any case, if there are five seats or less available, all products of the traveling media will be pooled. If more than 13 seats are available, they will be offered to news organizations in the following order: TV, radio, large newspapers, small newspapers, photo, wires.

Allocated seats will be assigned like this (cuts, based seats available, will come from the bottom):

1. AP
2. TV Correspondent
3. TV Camera (Pool)
4. Reuters
5. AFP
6. TV
7. TV
8. Large newspaper/news service/magazine
9. Small newspaper/news service/magazine
10. Large newspaper/news service/magazine
11. Radio
12. Photographer
13. Rotating wire service

4. **Selecting Media:** Within a group, media outlets will initially be ranked based on their deliberate and long-term commitment (prior to September 11, 2001) to covering the Pentagon and the Secretary of Defense's traveling schedule. Once the initial list (group-level) is established, a numerical rotation will determine the media organizations that are invited to travel on the next trip. To avoid manipulation of the roster, if trip selection is offered to a media outlet and is subsequently turned down, that organization will move to the bottom of the list. Organizations that would like to be included after the initial rotation is established will be vetted for continuing commitment to covering the Pentagon, then added to the bottom of the roster.

5. Unique situations will be considered and adjudicated on a case-by-case basis by the ASD(PA).

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13 December 2001

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## The Way Ahead in Afghanistan

1. We intend to put in place a total of three nearly-identical Coalition Press Information Centers (CPICs) in Afghanistan at Mazar-e Sharif, Bagram and Qandahar Airport.
2. We envision having 5-10 public affairs staff at each site, with rudimentary communication capability (small numbers of cell phones, e-mail, etc.).
3. Function of staff at each site is to facilitate access to U.S. and coalition forces that are posted there. That means interviews, camera access – anything we can provide within available resources to help you do your job.
4. Mazar-e Sharif. This site will become a hub of humanitarian aid activity in the northern part of Afghanistan. The runway is being repaired and upgraded by U.S. Air Force Red Horse engineers and local contractors; a Jordanian field hospital is being installed; French and American force protection soldiers are on station; and NGO reps will soon use this as a site for moving relief supplies in, then moving them further into Afghanistan.
5. Bagram. Very similar function in the east central part of Afghanistan. Runway here is being repaired and upgraded by U.S. Navy SEABEES and local contractors; a Jordanian mine flail called an Aardvark is clearing mines and unexploded ordnance; American 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain Division soldiers are providing perimeter security; and NGO reps will soon be here as well.
6. Qandahar Airport. Same function in southwestern Afghanistan. This site still immature and many days away from a useable runway, living conditions, etc., but ultimate goal remains the same.
7. Access. We hope to transition to a round-robin military aircraft leaving Bahrain weekly and moving news media reps to Qandahar – Bagram – Mazar – Bahrain. Will be coordinated out of a small (3-5 people) logistics cell in Bahrain. Don't have this set up yet, but we envision matching schedules, desires of correspondents and availability of our forces on the ground as much as possible to help you do your job. This system would remain in place until U.S. military forces leave Afghanistan or news interest fades.





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