



ISAF DCOS Communication



Media Spokesperson Training

Overall Briefing Classification:

(NATO/ISAF UNCLASSIFIED FOUO)



Spokesperson Training



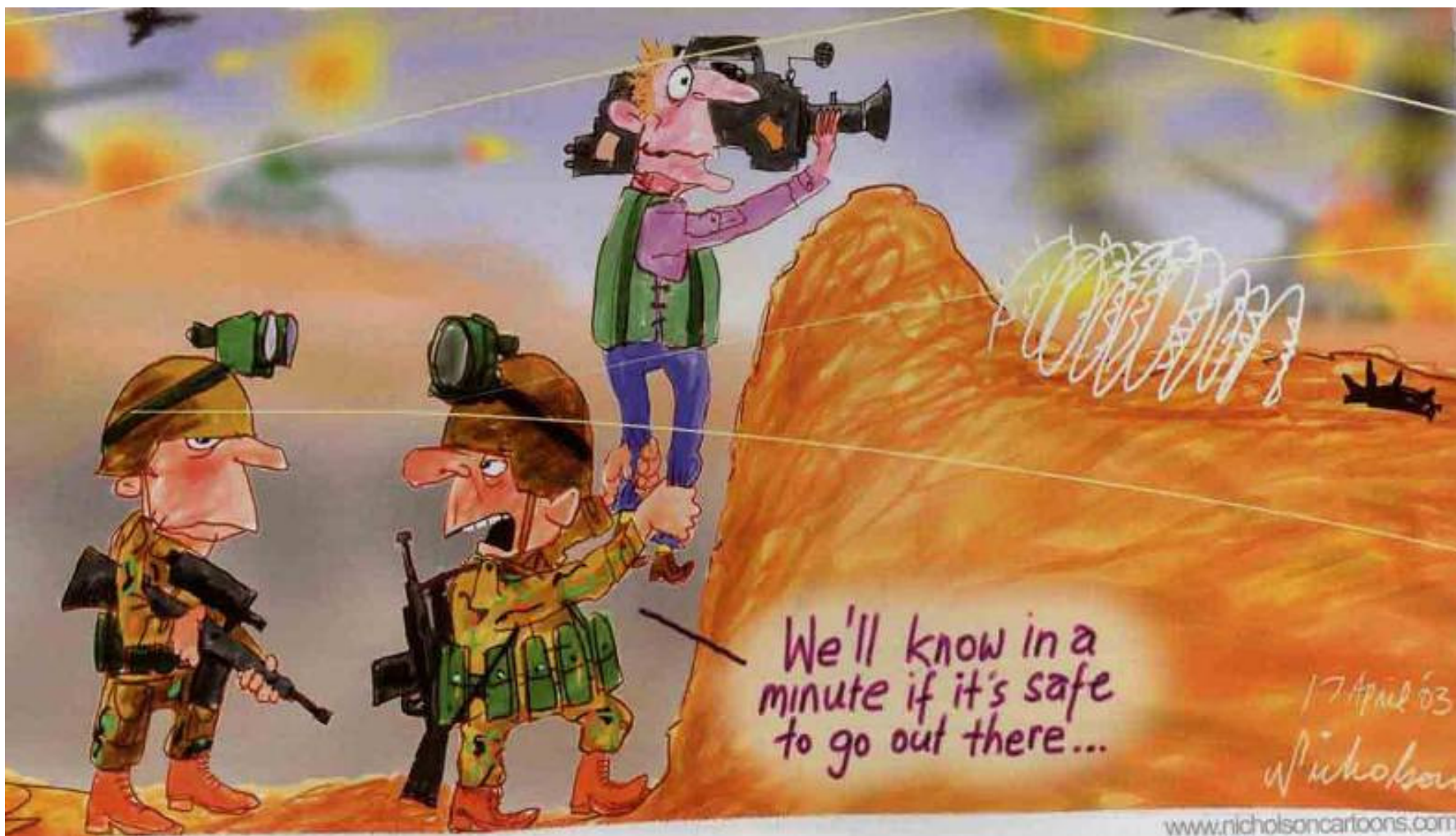
- Objectives
- The Media
- ISAF Spokespeople
- The Four C' s of Success
- Interview Techniques
- Afghan Media
- Training Module



Objectives



- Prepare you to control your media environment
- Help you develop and communicate your messages
- Strengthen your confidence level with the media





The Media



- Know who wants to interview you
 - International, European or Afghan
 - Television, Radio or Print





The Media



- Their constraints
 - Deadlines!
 - Time and space limitations
- Their goals
 - Need to interview a credible source
 - Gaining context to other sources
 - Compete for ratings...it's business
 - Exclusive content



ISAF Spokespeople



Any uniformed member regardless of rank, who responds to media or speaks publicly about an issue will be perceived as an official ISAF spokesperson.





ISAF Spokespeople



Official: Strategic Commanders, Force and Operational Commanders

Designated: Subject Matter Experts who have been tasked to communicate about a specific issue or topic



The Four Cs of Success



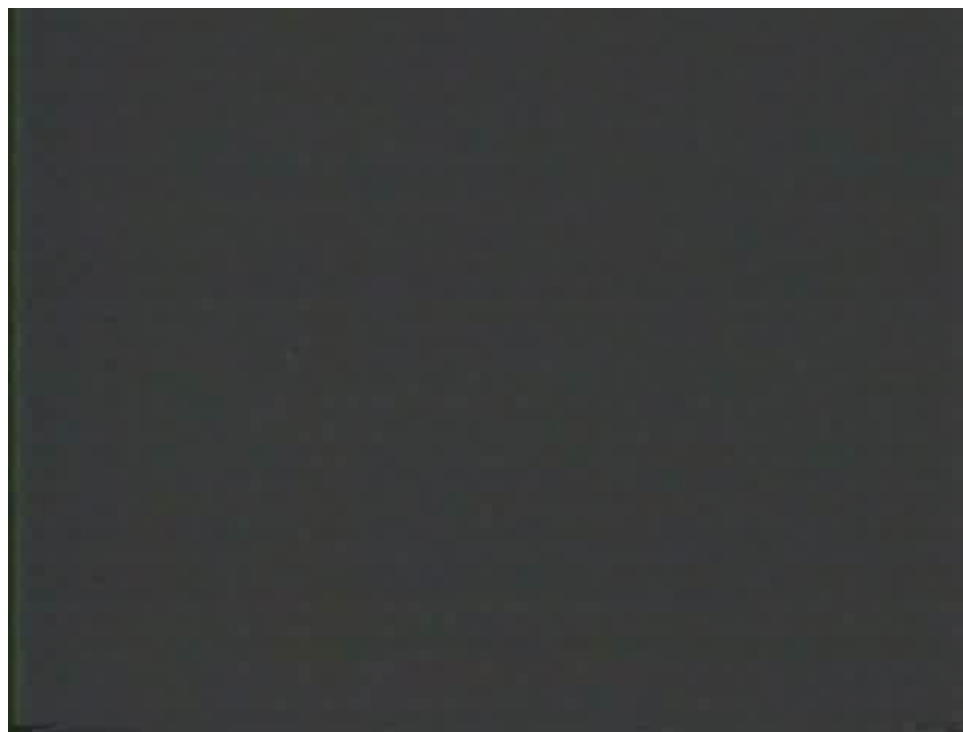
- **Control**
- **Communication points**
- **Cosmetics**
- **Commandments**



Control



**You can't control reporters,
but you can control your behavior**





Control



- Know what to expect and be ready to participate actively
- Ground rules
 - Establish attribution prior with PAO
 - Length of time
- Be positive and energetic
- Stay in your lane



Control



- Listen carefully to questions
- Look at reporter throughout interview
- Avoid
 - Comparisons
 - Promises
 - Speculation
 - Repeating negatives



Communication Points



- Choose three key messages:
“Commercials”
- What do you want the audience to remember?
- Anticipate likely questions, and work to fit your commercials into your answers
- Don't just answer the questions you get....BRIDGE to your own commercial



Communication Points



- Condense your knowledge down to 3 key messages
- Sticking to your key messages allows you to exert more control on the reporter's final story
- For Afghan media develop your messages:
 - How are we supporting this Afghan-led process?
 - Reinforce cooperation while keeping Afghan voice in lead



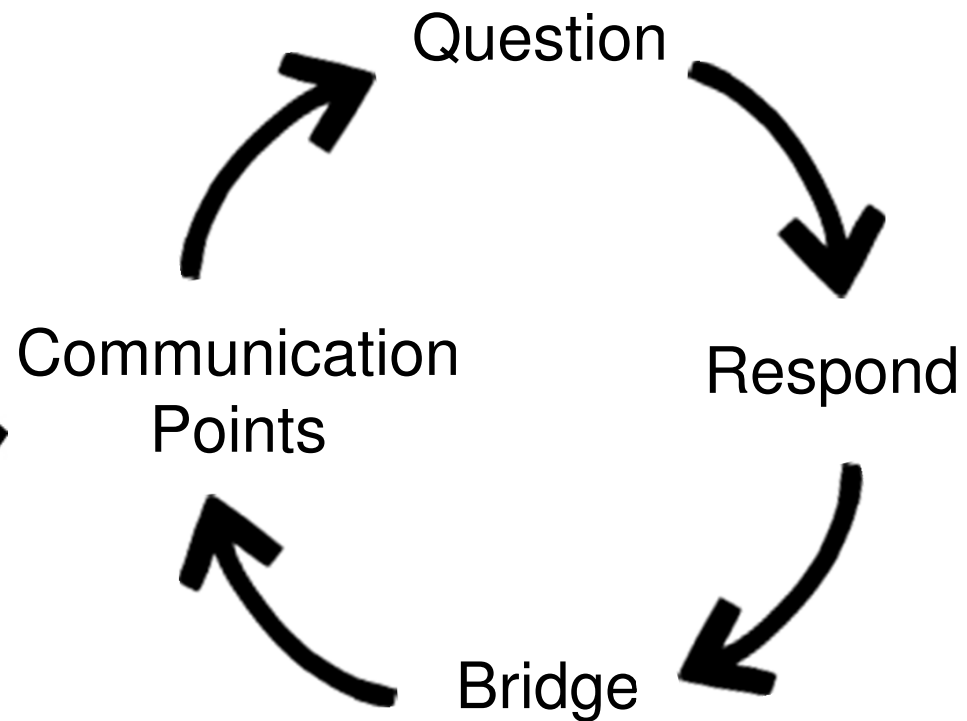
Communication Points



- Don't dilute your message with jargon and heavy detail
- If the reporter asks if you “have something to add?” – use your commercial – you **ALWAYS** have something to add



Get to “your” Comm Points





Bridging Phrases



- First let me say...
- The key issue here is...
- What's important here is...
- What I can say is...
- Those issues will be part of any inquiry...what I can say is...
- What I want you to know is...





Do Your Points Resonate?



Telling your story

10 seconds = 35 words

6.5 seconds = 21 words



Cosmetics



- You are the message!
- Your visual presentation and how you deliver the message is of paramount importance
- That's where the cosmetics of TV appearances comes in..



Cosmetics



- Body language
 - Good posture
 - Avoid nervous movements
 - Hand gestures for emphasis okay...avoid clasping
- Voice
 - Vary your pitch, tone, pacing
 - Avoid “up-speak” and trailing off
 - Watch for verbals tics (repetitive phrases)
- Clothing
 - Squared away



Commandment



- Thou Shalt Not Lie
- Stay In Your Lane



Interview Techniques





Interview Techniques



- Pass on responsibility to appropriate area/person/organization
- Clarify questions
- Correct the interviewer on important factual errors





Interview Techniques



- You are always on the record!
- Cameras and microphones are always on!

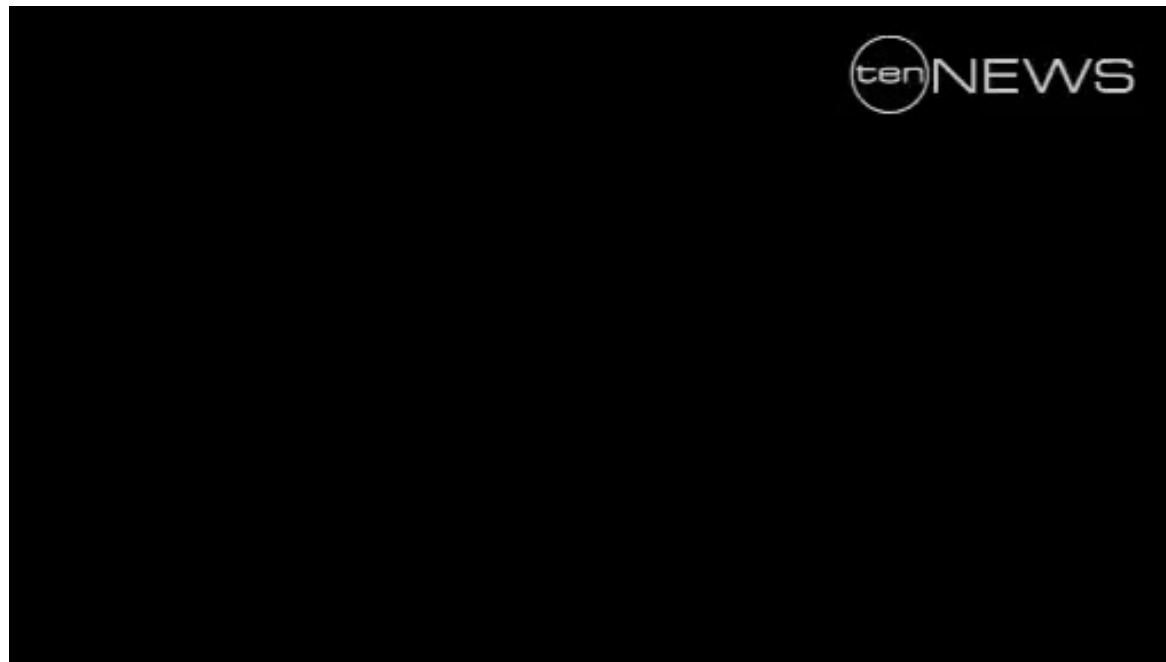




Tough Questions



- Never say no comment!
- Look for the positive in the question





Better approach



- Reporter: There have been a lot of reports lately about ISAF being responsible for high numbers of civilian casualties. What do you have to say about that?
- You: Afghanistan remains a dangerous place and accident or unintentional casualties are a consequence of war – we try to prevent through a variety of measures which calls upon our forces to exercise courageous restraint during operations.



Engaging with Afghan Media





Engaging with Afghan Media



Major Differences

- No mutual agreements on professionalism
 - Giving credence to entities like Taliban via quotes, etc.
 - Under almost constant threat by outside groups
- Quantitative vs. Qualitative
 - Rather than “big picture” analysis, prefer lists of numbers
- No cohesion with other news agencies
 - Repeat questions
- They’ ll interview you, but they probably won’ t be satisfied without getting an Afghan voice too



Engaging with Afghan Media



Similarities

- Expectation of exclusivity
- Immediate news delivery
 - Timely facts are effective - even if scant on details
 - Speedy follow-up is crucial
- Supported by Afghan ministries
- They are getting facts from many agencies, not just ISAF
- In the process of forming unions
- They are journalists; they will occasionally sensationalize and everything is on the record



Engaging with Afghan Media



How they interact - What they expect

- Political Questions
 - Most assume we have an agenda (religion or resources)
 - Aggressive, pointed
- Wandering, multi-part questions
 - Hoping for different answers
 - Regional, tribal focus
- Believable explanations
 - Persuasive messages in agreement with Afghan leaders
 - Plan for the future - never forgetting the past



Engaging with Afghan Media



How to prepare

- First stop: **Public Affairs**
 - Latest talking points, lines to take
 - Big picture perspective
- Afghan point of view
 - What are the Afghan ministries saying
 - Have the locals already expressed their concerns
- Develop your messages
 - How are we supporting this Afghan-led process
 - Reinforce cooperation while keeping Afghan voice in lead



Engaging with Afghan Media



How to prepare

- Pre-translated statements
 - Takeaways for Afghan media
 - Help for translators

- Pre-game with translator
 - Express your overall concepts, purpose, context
 - Coordinate signals, timing



Engaging with Afghan Media



Execution

- A few Dari/Pashto words go a long way
 - Take a moment to meet/greet
- Focus on interviewer
 - Don't speak to translator
 - Don't look at camera
- Assume making first impression
 - Give interview as if it's the first time audience is hearing these thoughts
- When possible, include Afghan interlocutor
 - Message will be heard with much more receptive ears when reinforced by Afghan partner

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*“My son, you have survived the ordeal by fire and the ordeal by water.
You now face the final challenge—ordeals by media.”*



Opening Statement



- Gives the 5 W' s and command messages
- Introduction (greeting, purpose and procedures)
- Presentation of facts (summary lead, body)
- Conclusion (reinforce theme or message)
- Emphasize competence and caring in the event of a tragedy



Language



- Simple, succinct, clear, jargon-free
- Visual – paint a picture with words
- Positive

Most importantly...

- Speak in sound-bites and
- **BELIEVE** what you say



Key rules



Don't:

- 1) Lie or spin
- 2) Just give them “just the facts”
- 3) Go easy on yourself when rehearsing
- 4) Be afraid to say “I don't know”
- 5) Expect anything more than fairness
- 6) Lose control
- 7) Use Defense or ISAF jargon
- 8) Assume the reporter knows what you are talking about

Do:

- 1) Stick to the facts
- 2) Answer with a declarative statement
- 3) Be prepared
- 4) Admit it, if you are unsure
- 5) Treat reporters with respect
- 6) Answer the question, before going back to your key messages
- 7) Keep it simple
- 8) Ask “Did I make myself clear?”



Conclusion



Keep to your message and
control your agenda