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MEMORANDUM FOR SECRETARIES OF THE MILITARY DEPARTMENTS
CHAIRMAN OF THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF
UNDER SECRETARIES OF DEFENSE
COMMANDERS OF THE COMBATANT COMMANDS
GENERAL COUNSEL OF THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
ASSISTANT SECRETARIES OF DEFENSE
DEPUTY UNDER SECRETARIES OF DEFENSE

SUBJECT: Policy for Department of Defense (DoD) Interactive Internet Activities

Purpose. Interactive internet activities are an essential part of DoD's responsibilities to provide information to the public, shape the security environment, and support military operations. This policy provides authority and guidance for these activities.

Definition. This policy defines interactive internet activities as: the use of a system accessible via the internet which allows for two-way communications, e.g., email, blogs, chat rooms, and internet bulletin boards, in a timely, if not real time basis; as opposed to a system in which information flows only one way.

Scope. This policy applies to public affairs activities and to programs, products, and actions that shape emotions, motives, reasoning, and behaviors of selected foreign entities.

Authority. Geographic Combatant Commanders, and Commander, U.S. Special Operations Command (USSOCOM), when designated as the supported Commander, are hereby delegated the approval authority for interactive internet activities in support of their operations and public affairs activities. The Assistant Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs (ASD (PA)) is hereby delegated the approval authority for public affairs interactive internet activities conducted by the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) and the Military Departments. Military Departments' interactive internet activities will be for the purposes of addressing manpower issues within or organizing, training, and equipping their Departments. The Commanders of the Combatant Commands and the ASD(PA) are responsible and accountable for ensuring that such activities follow this policy. Neither the Commanders of the Combatant Commands nor the ASD(PA) may delegate authorities provided in this policy.

Content. Interactive internet activities within the scope of this policy will be accurate and true in fact and intent. The Under Secretary of Defense for Policy will

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coordinate the Department's interactive internet activities with the U.S. Department of State. Combatant Commanders will coordinate interactive internet activities with the U.S. Ambassadors, as appropriate.

Intellectual Property. Messages and materials protected by law such as graphics, pictures, video, and illustrations used in any interactive internet activity will comply with relevant intellectual property laws, policies and guidance.

Commercial Gain or Endorsement. Interactive internet activities will not operate for commercial gain, and will not promote or endorse financial or other interests of commercial or non-governmental entities.

Media. Combatant Commanders and ASD (PA) will ensure that only public affairs personnel engage in interactive internet activities with journalists employed by media organizations including news websites, online bulletin boards, and blog sites affiliated with news organizations. Some individuals and websites not affiliated with established news organizations have become recognized news sources for large audiences, giving them stature equivalent to an established news organization. Only public affairs organizations may engage such designated individuals and websites. It is the responsibility of all Combatant Commanders to determine when the internet communications of specific individuals and websites rise to a level equivalent to a news organization.

Contractor Involvement. Contracts or task orders that provide support for approved interactive internet activities within the scope of this policy will fully detail the scope of the work and will provide for rigorous U.S. Government oversight.

Quality Assurance. Combatant Commanders and ASD (PA) are accountable and responsible for quality assurance of interactive internet activities conducted under their purview and for ensuring that the implications of their actions beyond the intended audience are addressed. Interactive internet activities will be conducted in the language and idiom of the intended audience. Special attention must be given to use only culturally appropriate messages and materials.

Attribution. All interactive internet activities within the scope of this policy will be attributable according to one of the three methods below. All OSD and Military Department interactive internet activities will be U.S. attribution only. For military operations, Combatant Commanders will determine the appropriate attribution method.

1) U.S. Attribution. This attribution method openly acknowledges U.S. involvement in interactive internet activities. This disclosure must be made in the content of the email or product, or in the initial phase of engaging in online exchanges. All public affairs interactive internet activities will use this attribution method.

2) Concurring Partner Nation Attribution. This method allows interactive internet activities developed by DOD to be attributable to a concurring partner nation. Both the partner nation and the appropriate U.S. Chief of Mission must agree to this attribution method before it is used.

3) Non-Attribution. This method allows a Combatant Commander to disseminate information without clear attribution. When asked if the U.S. Government or DOD is the source of the specific activity, DOD will acknowledge its involvement as soon as operationally feasible as determined by the Combatant Commander. If a Combatant Commander believes that it will not be possible due to operational considerations to attribute the internet activity to DOD, he will request an exception to policy. This method is only authorized for named operations in the Global War on Terrorism, or when specified in other Secretary of Defense execute orders.

Periodic Review. The Strategic Communication Integration Group Executive Committee (SCIG EXCOM) will initiate an annual review of interactive internet activities within the scope of this policy. As part of the review, Combatant Commanders and ASD (PA) are responsible for providing a summary of their interactive internet activities containing samples of representative products and providing measures of performance and effectiveness.

Best Practices. USSOCOM, in consultation with JFCOM, will produce a publication of "Best Practices for Interactive Internet Activities." USSOCOM, in consultation with JFCOM, will update this publication on an annual basis. This publication and all updates will be submitted to the Deputy Secretary of Defense, supported by the SCIG EXCOM, for review and approval.

Exceptions. Exceptions, requests for additional authorities, and recommended changes to this policy will be directed to the Deputy Secretary of Defense, supported by the SCIG EXCOM, for review and approval.