

Ground Rules Agreement

The following is a listing of ground rules which have been developed to protect members of the Armed Services from the release of information which could potentially threaten their security or safety during ongoing operations.

These ground rules recognize the inherent Constitutional right of the media to cover military operations and are in no way intended to prevent release of derogatory, embarrassing, negative or non-complimentary information. During an operation or exercise, specific information on friendly force troop movements, tactical deployments, and dispositions that would jeopardize operational security or lives will not be released. This would include unit designations, names of operations, and size of friendly forces involved, until released by USCENTCOM or its designated release authority. Acceptance of these ground rules is an agreement between you and the granting commands. You agree to follow the ground rules and the command will provide support, access to military members, information and other privileges. Violation of ground rules, however, may result in the revocation of your credentials.

News media personnel must carry and support any personal and professional gear they take with them, including protective cases for professional equipment, batteries, cables, converters, etc. Media members should be physically fit and prepared to withstand the rigorous conditions required to operate in a desert environment.

1. All interviews with soldiers will be on the record. Security at the interview source is the policy. Interviews with pilots and aircrew members are authorized upon completion of missions; however, release of information must conform to media ground rules.

2. Print or broadcast stories will be datelined by general geographical description such as northern Arabian Peninsula, Northern Arabian Gulf, etc. No specific locations will be used when filing stories.

3. Because of host-nation requirements, media must stay with public affairs escorts while on host nation bases. At other U.S. tactical or field locations and encampments, a public affairs escort may be required because of security, safety, and mission requirements as determined by the host commander. Media will remain with military escorts at all times, until released, and follow instructions regarding their activities.

4. Media will not carry personal weapons.

5. The following categories of information are not releasable since their publication or broadcast could jeopardize operations and endanger lives.

a. For U.S. or coalition units, specific numerical information on troop strength, equipment or critical supplies (e.g. artillery, tanks, landing craft, radars, trucks, water, etc.).

b. Specific number of aircraft in units below wing level, or identification of mission aircraft points of origin, other than land or carrier based. Number and type of aircraft may be described in very general terms such as "large flight", "small flight", "many", "few", "fighters", "fixed wing", etc.

c. Names of military installations or specific geographic locations of military units in the USCENTCOM area of responsibility, unless specifically released by the Department of Defense.

d. Information regarding future operations, current operations or strikes including postponed or cancelled operations, or information regarding security precautions at military installations or encampments.

f. Photography that would show level of security at military installations or encampments, especially aerial and satellite photography which would reveal the name or specific location of military units or installations.

e. Details of rules of engagement.

f. Information on intelligence collection activities including targets, methods and results.

g. Information on special operations units, unique operations methodology or tactics, for example, air operations, angles of attack, and speeds; naval tactical or evasive maneuvers, etc. General terms such as "low" or "fast" may be used.

h. Information on effectiveness of enemy electronic warfare.

i. Information on effectiveness of enemy camouflage and cover.

k. Additional guidelines may be necessary to protect tactical security.

6. The following categories of information are releasable.

a. Arrival of U.S. military units in the USCENTCOM area of responsibility when officially announced. Mode of travel (sea or air), dates of departure, and home station.

b. Approximate friendly force strength figures.

c. Nonsensitive, unclassified information regarding U.S. air, ground, and sea operations, past and present.

d. Size of friendly force participating in an action or operation will be disclosed using general terms such as "multi-battalion." Specific force or unit identification may be released when it no longer warrants security protection.

e. Generic description of origin of air operations, such as "land-based."

f. Date, time or location of previous conventional military missions and actions as well as mission results.

g. Types of ordnance expended in general terms.

h. Number of aerial combat or reconnaissance missions or sorties flown in USCENTCOM's area of operation.

i. Type of forces involved (e.g., air defense, infantry, armor, Marines).

j. Weather and climate conditions.

k. Allied participation by type of operation (ships, aircraft, ground units, etc.) After approval of host nation government.

l. Conventional operation code names.

m. Names and hometowns of U.S. military units or individuals.

Accreditation

a. News media representatives seeking accreditation should be willing to sign the following statement: "I am not aware of any existing physical or health conditions which would adversely affect my covering strenuous combat activities." _____ (Initial)

b. News media representatives seeking accreditation should be willing to sign and date, in the presence of a PAO/media escort officer, the following statement: "I (insert name) _____, am (insert job description) _____ in the employ of _____(insert news organization), have read the aforementioned media ground rules and agree, with my signature, to abide by them. I also understand that violation of these ground rules is cause for the revocation of my media accreditation with USCENTCOM."

Signature Date

Printed Name, affiliate, address & phone number

Witness Signature Date

Witness Printed Name, Rank & Organization

Hold Harmless Agreement

Hold Harmless/Release From Liability Statement

1. I recognize that covering combat and other military operations carries with it certain inherent risks to life, limb, and equipment.
2. I recognize that the U.S. military, in pursuing the successful accomplishment of its mission, cannot guarantee my personal safety or the safety of my equipment.
3. I hereby release the U.S. Government and the U.S. military of any liability from and hold them harmless for any injuries I may suffer, or any equipment that may be damaged as a result of my covering combat or any other military operations.
4. I understand that my agreement to this statement is a condition of being credentialed to cover U.S. military operations and receiving assistance for that coverage.

Signature _____ Date _____

Printed Name, affiliate, address & phone number _____

Witness Signature _____ Date _____

Witness Printed Name, Rank & Organization _____

WAIVER OF LIABILITY STATEMENT

Whereby, I _____, passport no:
_____ am about to travel with _____ forces, and whereas I am doing so entirely upon my own initiative, risk and responsibility; now therefore in consideration of the permission extended to me; I do hereby for myself, my heirs, executors and administrators, remiss, release and forever discharge _____ and its member officers, agents and employees acting officially or otherwise, from any and all claims, demands, actions or causes of action, on account of my death or on account of any injury to me or my property which may occur from any cause during my stay, travel as well as all ground, flight or sea operations incidents thereto.

I also agree to withhold any classified information, which may be accidentally disclosed to me: and to respect embargo restrictions, which may be imposed on information that, if disclosed, may jeopardize operational security. During my stay with _____ forces, I will not interfere with operations. I understand that failure to comply with these security restrictions will result in the loss of authorization to accompany _____ and may result in cancellation of my press registration.

Signature

Witness

Printed Name

Nationality

Address: _____

Please provide contact information for a person to be notified in case of an emergency below (preferably next immediate relative):