



THE SECRETARY OF THE NAVY
WASHINGTON DC 20350-1000

August 7, 2025

MEMORANDUM FOR CHIEF OF NAVAL OPERATIONS
COMMANDANT OF THE MARINE CORPS
ASSISTANT SECRETARIES OF THE NAVY
GENERAL COUNSEL OF THE NAVY

SUBJECT: Worldwide Public Affairs Reorganization – Centralized Hiring and Contracting Authority

To support the Department of the Navy's (DON) effort to increase efficiency and effectiveness, eliminate redundancies, and focus manpower and contracting on mission-essential capabilities, this Memorandum directs immediate action to optimize Public Affairs activities across the Navy to better meet these objectives.

The Department's communications efforts must be cohesive and in support of my priorities. A 20 January 2025 baseline headcount, messaging and contracting review reveals significant personnel growth within the civilian Public Affairs community that exceeds mission-driven demand. The review found the DON lacks a centralized communications strategy, resulting in individual commands and offices developing messaging without incorporating broader priorities. It was also discovered that Public Affairs capabilities and support are not validated and result in unnecessary redundancy, inefficient use of taxpayer funds, and lacks cohesive messaging across the fleet. To reduce administrative overhead and ensure accountability, I direct the following actions:

1. Rebalance, Reduce the DON's Civilian Public Affairs Workforce. Within 45 days of the release of this Memorandum, the Navy Chief of Information (CHINFO) shall deliver to me a plan to reduce the number of U.S. Navy civilian Public Affairs authorized billets by **no less than 35%** relative to the headcount on 20 January 2025. U.S. Marine Corps civilian Public Affairs authorized billets are excluded from this reduction plan due to Service-wide personnel decreases and ongoing Force Optimization Review. CHINFO will coordinate with the Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Manpower and Reserve Affairs to achieve the laydown analysis of existing billets.

- This reduction plan must include detailed justification for retained billets, prioritized by mission-critical communications requirements, geographic and operational necessity and capacity to support the fleet and operating forces.
- Reductions should prioritize the elimination of any redundant billets in headquarters, staff support and non-operational environments.
- In cases where the Department would be better served by the assignment of a uniformed Service Member, consider an active-duty position.

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- For units with an inconsistent or rare need for Public Affairs Officer (PAO) support, consider a part-time Reserve position.

2. Centralized Hiring Authority for PAOs. Effective immediately, all hiring actions, billet creations or conversions related to civilian PAOs within the DON must be approved by CHINFO and Headquarters Marine Corps Communications Directorate (CD) for each respective Service. No subordinate commands, staff elements or Echelon II commands may hire or appoint a civilian PAO without written approval. This directive applies to civilian positions functioning in a Public Affairs capacity including, but not limited to, the 1035 series of GS employees.

3. Centralized Public Affairs Contracting Authority. All contracts and procurement to support Public Affairs and communications across the DON must be validated by CHINFO and CD for necessity and to ensure that it contributes to the overarching communications priorities of the DON. To implement this process, CHINFO and CD must coordinate with the Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Research, Development, and Acquisition and present a proposal to centralize contracting and procurement under one multi-award vehicle to be used by all subordinate commands requiring such support. This effort should run concurrently with the 35% reduction analysis. The contracting plan, submitted to me by CHINFO, must include:

- A proposal to develop a central contract vehicle including multiple companies specializing in marketing and communications.
- A process for Navy and Marine Corps organizations utilizing the vehicle to transfer funding.
- A management plan for CHINFO and CD to oversee the vehicle to validate contractor requests.
- A prioritization of contracts that contributes to warfighting, readiness and the health and welfare of our Service Members.

This initiative is essential to eliminate duplicative roles, concentrate talent on the highest priority functions, focus on contracting support where it is most needed and ensure alignment with commitment to mission-driven resource management, cost savings and operational lethality. It is also critical to ensure that the Navy and the Marine Corps effectively communicate with stakeholders in a strategically nested manner that aligns with DON priorities.

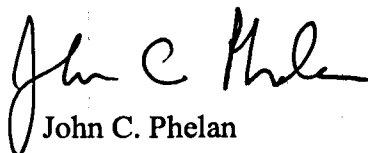
Projected savings will be documented in the CHINFO and CD submissions. Additional analysis will be conducted by CHINFO and CD to assess opportunities for reinvestment into fleet support and strategic communications priorities using uniformed PAOs.

All Echelon II and below commands are subject to this Memorandum. DON uniformed personnel, recruiting commands and positions funded by non-appropriated funds are excluded from reduction efforts.

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The Department will stand ready to implement this directive. Further instructions will follow upon the submission of the reorganization plan.

Ensure widest dissemination of this Memorandum.


John C. Phelan

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