



Department of Defense INSTRUCTION

NUMBER 5120.20

October 18, 2010

Incorporating Change 1, Effective November 20, 2017

ATSD(PA)

SUBJECT: American Forces Radio and Television Service (AFRTS)

- References:**
- (a) DoD Directive 5120.20, "Armed Forces Radio and Television Service (AFRTS)," December 17, 1991 (hereby cancelled)
 - (b) DoD Directive 5122.05, "Assistant to the Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs (ATSD(PA))," August 7, 2017
 - (c) DoD Directive 5105.74, "Defense Media Activity (DMA)," December 18, 2007, as amended
 - (d) DoD Manual 5120.20, "Management of American Forces Radio and Television Service (AFRTS)," June 3, 2014
 - (e) DoD Instruction 5040.02, "Visual Information (VI)," October 27, 2011, as amended
 - (f) DoD Instruction 4000.19, "Support Agreements," April 25, 2013, as amended

1. **PURPOSE.** This Instruction reissues Reference (a) as a DoD Instruction (DoDI) in accordance with the authority in References (b) and (c) to establish policy, assign responsibilities, and prescribe procedures for AFRTS.

2. **APPLICABILITY.** This Instruction applies to OSD, the Military Departments, the Office of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Joint Staff, the Combatant Commands, the Office of the Inspector General of the Department of Defense, the Defense Agencies, the DoD Field Activities, and all other organizational entities within the Department of Defense (hereafter referred to collectively as the "DoD Components").

3. **DEFINITIONS.** See Glossary.

4. **POLICY.** It is DoD policy that:

a. The Department of Defense shall maintain an internal information program to provide U.S. radio and television news, information, and entertainment programming to Military Service members, DoD civilian and contract employees, and their families overseas, on board U.S. Navy and Coast Guard ships at sea, and other authorized users.

b. The DoD internal information program shall:

(1) Provide U.S. military commanders worldwide with a unique means to communicate internal information directly to DoD personnel and their family members overseas.

(2) Provide overseas DoD personnel and their families the same type of information and entertainment programming as their fellow citizens in the United States, shall not be subject to censorship, and shall not attempt to propagandize or manipulate its intended audience, subject to the considerations in paragraph 3.b. of Enclosure 2.

(3) Assist in maintaining and enhancing the morale, readiness, situational awareness, and well-being of DoD personnel and their family members overseas. Communicate messages and themes from senior DoD leaders (i.e., Secretary of Defense, Secretaries of the Military Departments, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Military Service Chiefs of Staff, Combatant Commanders), as well as other leaders in the chain of command, in order to support and improve quality of life and morale; promote situational awareness; provide timely and immediate force protection information; and sustain readiness.

(4) Not seek to compete for audiences with any host nation or commercial broadcast service or organization. Broadcasts generated by the DoD internal information program are directed toward DoD audiences overseas only. The fact that others may receive those broadcasts is the result of the inherent characteristics of radio and television transmissions.

(5) Not endorse or imply DoD endorsement of any commercial product or service (except as provided in DoD Manual 5120.20 (Reference (d))).

(6) Not be used to support external information programs, in accordance with congressionally-imposed budget and operational limitations. DoD and command public affairs officers are the releasing authority for any locally produced internal information material.

(7) Implement procedural guidance as described in this Instruction.

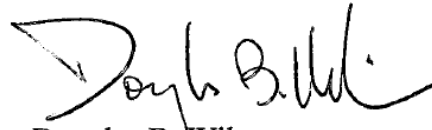
5. RESPONSIBILITIES. See Enclosure 1.

6. PROCEDURES. See Enclosure 2.

7. RELEASABILITY. **Cleared for public release.** This Instruction is available on the Directives Division Website at <http://www.esd.whs.mil/DD/>.

8. SUMMARY OF CHANGE 1. The changes to this issuance are administrative and update organizational titles and references for accuracy.

9. EFFECTIVE DATE. This Instruction is effective October 18, 2010.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Douglas B. Wilson". The signature is stylized with a large initial "D" and a cursive "Wilson".

Douglas B. Wilson
Assistant Secretary of Defense
for Public Affairs

Enclosures

1. Responsibilities
 2. Procedures
- Glossary

ENCLOSURE 1

RESPONSIBILITIES

1. ASSISTANT TO THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FOR PUBLIC AFFAIRS (ATSD(PA)).

The ATSD(PA) shall:

- a. Develop broad DoD policy guidelines and objectives for DoD internal information programs.
- b. Provide DoD policy and operational direction to the Director, AFRTS, through the Director, Defense Media Activity (DMA).
- c. Oversee the implementation of the procedures in this Instruction by the Director, DMA.
- d. Develop supporting guidance on AFRTS matters.

2. DIRECTOR, DMA. The Director, DMA, under the authority, direction, and control of the ATSD(PA), shall:

- a. Select and supervise the Director, AFRTS.
- b. Exercise authority, direction, and control of AFRTS and the DMA component organizations that operate, manage, and maintain AFRTS networks and outlets.

3. DIRECTOR, AFRTS. The Director, AFRTS, under the authority, direction, and control of the Director, DMA, shall:

- a. Develop internal policies and procedures for the management and operation of DoD AFRTS activities, oversee their implementation, and evaluate and direct corrective action to ensure that AFRTS is properly structured, staffed, and managed.
- b. Exercise AFRTS fiscal and manpower resource control through the Planning, Programming, Budgeting, and Execution System and monitor the implementation of approved programs.
- c. Authorize the configuration and capabilities of AFRTS outlets and networks.
- d. Ensure a free flow of information and entertainment programming, without censorship, propagandizing, or manipulation, to DoD personnel and their family members overseas.

e. Ensure that all AFRTS activities are in conformance with host-country rules and regulations governing radio and television transmissions and are guided by the applicable rules and regulations of the Federal Communications Commission.

f. In coordination with the Commandant, Defense Information School, establish standards for the training of AFRTS management, production, and technical staffs.

g. Oversee and develop internal policies for:

(1) The worldwide Satellite Network and Direct-To-Sailor satellite distribution systems.

(2) Joint workforce standards for the management of AFRTS outlets worldwide.

(3) The operation, maintenance, and standardized design of equipment at AFRTS outlets.

(4) Centralized deliberate wartime and contingency planning and operations for AFRTS support of the Combatant Commands worldwide. To accomplish this function, the Director, AFRTS, shall:

(a) Act as the contingency and wartime manager of AFRTS on behalf of the AFSD(PA) and the Combatant Commands.

(b) Act as the DoD lead agent responsible for the allocation, reapportionment, and redistribution of available AFRTS resources based on the documented requirements of the Combatant Commands.

(c) Direct and coordinate AFRTS re-supply efforts in time of war and for contingency operations based on the documented requirements of the Combatant Commands.

h. Oversee management of the American Forces Network Broadcast Center (AFN-BC).

i. Issue instructional-type memorandums and provide guidance to the Combatant Commands and DMA component organizations for distribution of radio and television programming in overseas locations.

j. As appropriate, consult with and inform the Combatant Commands on matters that impact their missions and responsibilities.

k. Establish internal policies and procedures for negotiation and payment of music and artist performance fees to foreign performing rights societies for the broadcast of copyrighted works.

l. In coordination with the DMA component organizations, develop and implement joint-Service personnel requirements for manning AFRTS outlets worldwide and ensure that the individual selected to be commander or senior manager of an AFRTS outlet is a U.S. citizen.

m. Ensure that the position of commander or senior manager of an AFRTS outlet is filled by a member of the U.S. military. The sole exception to this is when the station is manned solely by DoD contract personnel. In this case the senior contract manager for the AFRTS station must be a U.S. citizen, and shall ensure that employees working in AFRTS outlets are employed by the U.S. Government or are under contract to the U.S. Government.

n. Establish and maintain centralized equipment allowances and authorizations for AFRTS outlets in accordance with DoDI 5040.02 (Reference (e)) and the DMA program for the standardization and certification of broadcast equipment.

o. Negotiate agreements or memorandums with host countries authorizing the establishment and continuance of AFRTS outlets.

p. Provide a full-time representative to the DMA Joint Assignment Desk.

q. Conduct, at a minimum, a scientific worldwide audience survey every 3 years. Encourage regional and local operations to conduct audience research via surveys and questionnaires as often as possible, but, at a minimum, once every 2 years. Submit all questionnaire and survey plans and instruments to AFRTS headquarters (HQ AFRTS) for approval before implementation. Submit a copy of all final survey or questionnaire results to HQ AFRTS.

4. COMMANDERS OF THE COMBATANT COMMANDS. The Commanders of the Combatant Commands, through the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff as appropriate, shall:

a. Coordinate with the Director, DMA, to ensure AFRTS services are provided to DoD personnel.

b. Establish an organization under the Combatant Command Director of Public Affairs to which allocated AFRTS resources are assigned on implementation of the theater wartime operation plan (OPLAN) and ensure that AFRTS operations are integrated into the OPLAN. During contingency operations, manage and support AFRTS operations in their respective areas of operations through the Combatant Command Director of Public Affairs.

c. Provide a list of subjects considered sensitive to host countries as related to AFRTS programming to the Director, AFRTS.

d. Support the negotiation of local and/or regional interservice support agreements or memorandums with host military installations and commands authorizing the establishment, continuance, and support of AFRTS outlets.

e. Ensure that nothing inhibits the free flow of radio and television information and entertainment programming to DoD personnel and their family members overseas.

f. Assist in obtaining approval of host governments for broadcast frequencies in countries in which AFRTS operates radio and television transmitters in support of DoD personnel serving in those countries.

ENCLOSURE 2

PROCEDURES

1. The DMA components shall:

- a. Follow the AFRTS management and operations procedures in Reference (d).
- b. Manage and provide personnel, equipment, and financial resources to operate and maintain AFRTS activities within their area of responsibility, in accordance with this Instruction, and References (c) and (d).
- c. Ensure that nothing inhibits the free flow of radio and television information and entertainment programming to overseas DoD personnel and their family members.
- d. Manage and monitor the gathering of news and information for the DMA internal information mission and support efforts for news gathering and broadcast by AFRTS outlets and the Pentagon Channel.
- e. Negotiate interservice support agreements for the support of AFRTS outlets in accordance with Reference (c) and DoDI 4000.19 (Reference (f)), and adjudicate differences in reaching agreements. Normally, these agreements shall be negotiated at the lowest possible level; however, all interservice support agreements must be reviewed and finalized by DMA headquarters (HQ DMA) prior to signature and/or approval.

2. The AFN-BC, a field activity of the AFRTS, shall:

- a. Provide radio and television news, information, and entertainment programming that is representative of U.S. radio and television programming for use within DoD broadcasting and for the exclusive use of AFRTS outlets.
- b. Be the only DoD source authorized to negotiate for, acquire, and distribute commercial radio and television programming. Exceptions shall be considered by AFRTS, on a case-by-case basis.
- c. Provide, through satellite and other means of distribution and transmission, the means for the dissemination of internal information programming in support of DoD internal information themes, goals, and objectives. Specifically, this includes radio and television spot announcements produced by AFRTS, The Pentagon Channel, and the Military Departments.
- d. Distribute only those religious programs and religious spot announcements specifically approved by the Armed Forces Chaplains Board, Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness.

e. Establish procedures to ensure a free and balanced flow of news and political reporting from the U.S. radio and television networks.

f. Alert AFRTS outlets of specific entertainment programming containing discretionary subject matter, including that considered sensitive to a host country as identified by the host-nation country team.

3. AFRTS internal information outlets:

a. Shall operate under the centralized management and control of the Director, AFRTS, in accordance with the policies and procedures developed by the Director, AFRTS, pursuant to this Instruction, Reference (c), and Reference (d).

b. Shall adhere to DoD broadcast policy as established in paragraph 4.b.(2) above the signature of this Instruction. That policy is subject to the following considerations:

(1) AFRTS outlets broadcast in foreign countries with the approval of the host government, which assigns broadcast frequencies and authorizes cable systems and satellite reception capabilities. Program topics considered sensitive to a host country may be restricted from broadcast on an AFRTS outlet in that country if they are listed on the official Host-Country Sensitivity List.

(2) The official Host-Country Sensitivity List is the only legitimate basis for deleting AFRTS broadcasts. That list is comprised of U.S. Embassy and host-country team inputs from each country. Only those activities can add to, or delete from, that list. It must reflect only genuine host-nation concerns that, if violated, could threaten AFRTS broadcast rights.

(3) Host-country sensitivity lists do not apply to AFRTS radio or television programs distributed on a base cable television system or an encoded broadcast channel. Therefore, there is no reason for such AFRTS outlets to screen any AFRTS program before airing. In those cases, the cablecast and/or encoded broadcasts are primarily limited to the authorized U.S. DoD audience and are not available for consumption by the general local national population.

(4) The Host-Country Sensitivity List applies to over-the-air broadcast transmissions, including both radio and television news programs. The responsibility for reviewing programming for sensitivities rests with the receiving network or station, which must determine whether those programs may be aired on schedule or should be delayed to permit reviewing for possible sensitivities infringements. The decision to delay programming shall be made by the receiving network or station in conjunction with the local command. The decision to actually withhold programming can be made only by the country team and then is based solely on the Host-Country Sensitivities List. A decision to withhold programming must be relayed immediately by the network or station to HQ DMA through command channels.

(5) News programs must not be edited to eliminate host-country sensitivities. If a host-country sensitivity occurs within a news program, the entire news program must be cancelled.

(6) When legal owners of programs prohibit AFRTS from broadcasting certain programs in specified geographic areas, those restrictions must be honored.

(7) The considerations in subparagraph 4.b.(2) do not permit the calculated withholding or editing of information and entertainment programming based on personal taste or preference. Such practices constitute censorship and are prohibited.

c. Shall maximize the use of information and entertainment programming provided by the AFN-BC located in Riverside, California, and internal information programming produced and distributed by the Military Departments or DMA. AFRTS outlets may produce local information and entertainment programming to support clearly documented local internal news and information objectives.

d. Shall not produce news editorials, commentary, or analysis; engage in investigative reporting; nor originate political news coverage.

e. Shall protect all programming and associated broadcast products in any physical or electronic form from unauthorized use or distribution and/or transmission. Those materials shall remain in the custody of the Department of Defense.

f. May be advised by AFRTS to broadcast special programming on certain occasions. Failure to comply with that requirement must be justified to the Director, DMA.

g. May not offer broadcasts in other than the English language, except as stated in Reference (d).

h. May be used to promote military training or off-duty education only at designated remote sites and aboard Navy ships, and as stated in Reference (d). Further exceptions to that policy shall be considered by the AFRTS, on a case-by-case basis. AFRTS outlets receive manpower, equipment, and other resources from the Department of Defense primarily for internal information. Outlets may not be used to produce non-AFRTS briefings, image tapes, or distinctly external (public information) public affairs products. In no instance shall the primary local internal information mission of the AFRTS outlet be jeopardized.

i. May not use films, video, audio, or other program materials from any non-AFRTS source (except for Navy Motion Picture Service movies aboard Navy ships, which are authorized on a case-by-case basis). That does not prevent use of military exchange-provided promotional material or trailers to inform the audience of coming attractions (see Reference (d)).

j. May not be used for any type of political or psychological operations, and may not produce or broadcast programming to serve any interests other than the overseas DoD internal audience.

4. Regional DMA commanders shall ensure that outlet information in the AFRTS Outlet/Station Database is updated within 30 days of the establishment, closure, or change of a facility under their oversight and in all cases reviewed not later than November 30 each year.

GLOSSARY

DEFINITIONS

These terms and their definitions are for the purpose of this Instruction.

affiliate. Any AFRTS-manned outlet authorized by AFRTS to produce and disseminate radio or television programming associated with an AFRTS operation. AFRTS-manned outlets also are responsible for DMA news gathering.

AFN-BC. A field activity of AFRTS located at March Air Reserve Base, California, that provides radio and television programming to AFRTS outlets.

AFRTS. A worldwide radio and television broadcasting organization that consists of a headquarters element within DMA. The AFRTS portion of DMA includes the AFN-BC and DMA component organizations, to include AFRTS networks and outlets and activities worldwide.

AFRTS network. Two or more AFRTS affiliates authorized by AFRTS to disseminate programming through interconnecting broadcast quality transmission circuits. The network and its affiliates ordinarily feed a wide geographic area through transmitters and repeaters, and cable and satellite distribution systems.

AFRTS outlet. Any facility authorized by AFRTS to disseminate radio and/or television programming. AFRTS outlets include AFRTS radio and television stations, relay sites, transmitters, and translators; Navy ships using AFRTS program materials; direct-to-home (DTH) satellite service; and other AFRTS broadcasting facilities providing services to remote and isolated locations where normal over-the-air service is unavailable.

AFRTS Satellite Network. The worldwide satellite distribution system that provides multiple channels of radio and television news, sports, information, and entertainment programming to AFRTS outlets overseas and to the DTH satellite service.

cable television. A service used to distribute AFRTS and other programming within military installations and Government-owned and leased housing. Cable systems for overseas installations require DoD approval. Installation, maintenance, replacement, and upgrade costs are the responsibility of the host command.

censorship. The intentional withholding or editing of news, information, and entertainment programming when such action is not supported by legitimate host-country sensitivities or by broadcast restrictions imposed by program owners.

country team. A council usually comprised of the senior members of the U.S. Embassy staff and other U.S. Government agencies in a particular country. Actual makeup of the country team is determined by the Ambassador or the senior Foreign Service officer in that country.

Direct-To-Sailor. The worldwide satellite distribution system that provides multiple channels of radio and television news, sports, and entertainment programming to U.S. Navy ships at sea.

DMA. A field activity under the authority, direction, and control of the ATSD(PA) that contributes to DoD operational readiness and combat effectiveness through development of policies, guidelines, standards, training, and central management of DoD internal information programs including AFRTS, the Pentagon Channel, print publications, news media, internet operations, the Defense Information School, and audiovisual and visual information activities. Communicates DoD and military department issues, policy, and guidance to internal audiences worldwide using public affairs, broadcast, print, web, and visual information personnel qualified in joint and Service-specific military occupational specialties. Designs, engineers, and provides acquisition support of visual and audiovisual equipment. Ensures still and motion media records depicting the Department of Defense, its heritage, and its activities are stored, preserved, and made available for use by the DoD Components, other Federal agencies, and commercial customers, as appropriate.

DMA component organizations. The organizations that:

Are responsible for AFRTS networks and regional outlet operations and for support of the Combatant Commands as specified by AFRTS.

Manage and operate DMA regional news operations and AFRTS regional maintenance and engineering operations.

DTH. The worldwide satellite distribution systems that provide multiple channels of radio and television news, sports, and entertainment programming directly to U.S. viewers living off military installations overseas.

entertainment programming. Radio and television programming that affords pleasure, diversion, or amusement such as comedy, drama, and variety shows; play-by-play sports; and musical recordings.

host-country sensitivities. Topics that are restricted from broadcast on an AFRTS outlet when determined by the U.S. Embassy or U.S. country team to be sensitive to the host country concerned.

information programming. Radio and television programming that communicates knowledge. Includes international, national, domestic, OSD, Joint Chiefs of Staff, Military Service, Combatant Command, component command, local, community, and host-nation news; issue analysis and commentary; public affairs programming; and spot announcements with an internal informational theme.

overseas. Refers to geographic locations outside of the contiguous United States, including U.S. Navy and U.S. Coast Guard ships at sea.