

(b)(6)

23

**From:** Whitman, Bryan Mr OSD PA  
**Sent:** Thursday, August 27, 2009 3:57 PM  
**To:** Lapan, David COL OSD PA  
**Subject:** Re: "Rating" reporters - This weekend's NPR program "On the Media" will include a segment on this.

Price did talk to Max.

----- Original Message -----

**From:** Lapan, David COL OSD PA  
**To:** Whitman, Bryan Mr OSD PA  
**Sent:** Thu Aug 27 15:55:27 2009  
**Subject:** Re: "Rating" reporters - This weekend's NPR program "On the Media" will include a segment on this.

What BS. Kevin continues to hype this -- secret reports?

Did you and Price ever talk to Max about this crap?

r/DAL

Col Dave Lapan, USMC  
Director, Defense Press Operations  
The Pentagon (2D961)  
Washington, DC. 20350-1400

(b)(6)

----- Original Message -----

**From:** Whitman, Bryan Mr OSD PA  
**To:** Floyd, Price B Mr OSD PA; Lapan, David COL OSD PA; (b)(6) Martin,  
Jeremy COL OSD PA  
**Cc:** (b)(6)

**Sent:** Thu Aug 27 15:15:14 2009  
**Subject:** RE: "Rating" reporters - This weekend's NPR program "On the Media" will include a segment on this.

Evidently because I've asked USF(A) some questions, I am "reviewing" the practice. Geez....

Pentagon: Reporter profiling under review By Kevin Baron, Stars and Stripes Mideast edition, Friday, August 28, 2009

ARLINGTON, Va. - Under fire following revelations that a military command in Afghanistan is compiling profiles of reporters covering U.S. military operations, Pentagon officials acknowledged Thursday that they were reviewing the practice even as they maintained that they were not making use of "positive," "negative" and "neutral" grades assigned to reporters' work by a Pentagon contractor.

"For me, a tool like this serves no purpose and it doesn't serve me with any value," Pentagon spokesman Bryan Whitman told reporters as some of the affected war correspondents began demanding to see their secret military profiles.

Whitman told Pentagon reporters that he was inquiring about the issue, but he added that the Pentagon is not launching any formal inquiry to the matter.

"I haven't seen anything that violates any policies, but again, I'm learning about aspects of this as I question our folks in Afghanistan," Whitman said.

"If I find something that is inconsistent with Defense Department values and policies, you can be sure I will address it."

Meanwhile, officials with U.S. Forces-Afghanistan acknowledged Thursday that the media profiles do exist, but they maintained that no favorability ratings are compiled.

"USFOR-A has only used this information to in part help assess performance in communicating information effectively to the public," USFOR-A spokesman Col. Wayne Shanks told Stars and Stripes in an e-mailed statement. "These reports do not 'rate' reporters or news outlets themselves, nor do we keep any reports on individual reporters other than personal information

name, passport or ID number, media outlet, etc.."

Shanks also contended that the compiling of the reporters' profiles was halted in May of this year.

But those claims run counter to the actual media profiles, the existence of which Stars and Stripes revealed earlier this week. The profiles contain ratings and pie charts purporting to depict whether an individual reporter's work is "positive," "negative" or "neutral," as well as advice on how best to place a reporter with a military unit to ensure positive coverage and "neutralize" negative stories.

One Pentagon correspondent who requested and received her profile on Thursday said it included her current work up through July..

Whitman said he was continuing to inquire about the issue with media affairs operations downrange in Afghanistan and said that his team has never requested such profiles of reporters.

Stars and Stripes first reported on Monday about the existence of the reporter profiles, which are being compiled under a \$1.5 million Pentagon contract granted to The Rendon Group, a controversial Washington, D.C.-based public relations firm that previously helped the Bush administration make its case for the 2003 invasion of Iraq.

Whitman has said repeatedly since Monday that the Rendon profiles were never used to determine whether a journalist's request to embed with U.S. forces would be approved or denied. But it remains unclear whether military commanders in Afghanistan have ever acted on Rendon's suggestions about how best to steer journalists toward "positive" coverage.

Military officials have also said that the Rendon profiles are only used to measure a reporter's accuracy. None of the actual profiles reviewed by Stars and Stripes, however, address questions of accuracy.

-----Original Message-----

From: Floyd, Price B Mr OSD PA

Sent: Thursday, August 27, 2009 3:06 PM

To: Lapan, David COL OSD PA; Whitman, Bryan Mr OSD PA; (b)(6)

(b)(6) COL OSD PA

Cc: [redacted] (b)(6)

Subject: RE: "Rating" reporters - This weekend's NPR program "On the Media" will include a segment on this.

I've got my talking point ready: "The Stars and Stripes seem to be giving The Onion a run for its money in the fake news business."

Price B. Floyd  
Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary  
of Defense for Public Affairs

[redacted] (b)(6)

-----Original Message-----

From: Lapan, David COL OSD PA  
Sent: Thursday, August 27, 2009 2:39 PM  
To: Whitman, Bryan Mr OSD PA; [redacted] (b)(6) Floyd, Price B Mr OSD PA; [redacted] (b)(6) COL OSD PA

Cc: [redacted] (b)(6)

Subject: RE: "Rating" reporters - This weekend's NPR program "On the Media" will include a segment on this.

Why not? I should be well-versed and practiced after this SPJ conference tomorrow...

-----Original Message-----

From: Whitman, Bryan Mr OSD PA  
Sent: Thursday, August 27, 2009 2:37 PM  
To: [redacted] (b)(6) Lapan, David COL OSD PA; [redacted] (b)(6) Floyd, Price B Mr OSD PA; [redacted] (b)(6) COL OSD PA

Cc: [redacted] (b)(6)

Subject: Re: "Rating" reporters - This weekend's NPR program "On the Media" will include a segment on this.

I vote for COL Lapan!

On 8/27/09 2:11 PM, [redacted] (b)(6) wrote:

- > At this point, no, but we will keep searching for clues in the program
- > promotion spots. [redacted] (b)(6)
- >

> -----Original Message-----

> From: Lapan, David COL OSD PA  
 > Sent: Thursday, August 27, 2009 2:10 PM  
 > To: [redacted] (b)(6) Whitman, Bryan Mr OSD PA; [redacted] (b)(6) [redacted] (b)(6) Floyd, Price B Mr OSD PA; [redacted] (b)(6) COL OSD PA

> Cc:

(b)(6)

> Subject: RE: "Rating" reporters - This weekend's NPR program "On the Media"

> will include a segment on this.

>

> Wonderful. Do we know who they are going to have on to provide the

> DoD view?

>

> r/DAL

>

>

> -----Original Message-----

> From: (b)(6)

> Sent: Thursday, August 27, 2009 1:46 PM

> To: Whitman, Bryan Mr OSD PA; Lapan, David COL OSD PA; (b)(6)

(b)(6)

> PA; Floyd, Price B Mr OSD PA; (b)(6) COL OSD PA

> Cc:

(b)(6)

> Subject: "Rating" reporters - This weekend's NPR program "On the Media" will

> include a segment on this.

>

> It airs locally on WAMU on Saturday 4-5.

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