# U.S. Army South
# NEWS FROM THE FRONT

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## PESCAA S-6 Operations

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## Overview

This article is intended for members of the Conference of American Armies (CAA) serving as the S-6 of the Permanent Executive Secretariat Conference of American Armies (PESCAA) and presents the S-6 roles and responsibilities during the Preparatory and Commanders' Conferences. This publication will discuss the processes and procedures in leveraging the CAA's technology that significantly enhanced the management, administration, and development of products and plans for the 32$^{nd}$ Cycle.

## Roles and Responsibilities at the Preparatory Conference

The PESCAA S-6 conducted critical planning functions and performed essential operational oversight on communications support. This included being responsible for supervising all automated information systems, computer network defense, and all aspects of SICOCEA (integrated communication system of the CAA) related systems. To prepare for the mission, the S-6 Plans Officer was very active in the staff's Military Decision Making Process (MDMP) process determining the supportability and feasibility of the signal plan for all phases of the conference. Early involvement in the MDMP is key in developing a comprehensive and complementary signal plan.

At the beginning of the planning process, there were numerous PESCAA S-6 challenges. First, the requirement to provide a primary means of communications for the PESCAA staff and all supported elements during the Preparatory Conference. Second, to provide two means of communication (cell phone/radios) to the airport team and escorts officers. With this in mind, the fix was to process a contract with Verizon for 30 pre-paid cell phones with service to voice and unlimited text. This enabled an ability to issue one phone per escort officer as a primary means of communications. Also, it was determined if any of the escort officers had government-issued phones in addition to the contracted phones. If they did, they provided their numbers so they could be added to the contact list created by the PESCAA S-6.

The PESCAA S-6 coordinated with Headquarters Department of the Army (HQDA), Protocol Office to use five radios that are programmed in the National Capitol Region (NCR) radio network as secondary means of communications. These radios provided coverage for all three of the Washington, D.C. main airports where the delegations were to arrive. Once the escort team completed their mission, these radios were then re-issued to the cultural event team. This provided a capability for this team to inform the PESCAA Operations (OPS) Center on the status and location of the delegations during the cultural event. This proved to be a best practice in helping to maintain situational awareness on the delegation at all times.

Using the hotel provided wireless fidelity (WIFI), facilitated network connectivity and reach back for the PESCAA staff. A request for Virtual Private Network (VPN) for the PESCAA government computers was also made and approved by the installation. This ensured a higher level of security for accessing Outlook e-mails and the Army South (ARSOUTH) SharePoint site.

One of the issues experienced during the Preparatory Conference was the control and the timely display of the slide presentations. The process to change slides on three different computers became very cumbersome. In order to change the slide presentations, you had to press "Enter" on three different computers. This method created a delay with these slide presentations. In order to fix the problem, the S-6 submitted a contract modification requesting the Perfect Cue system. This device enables the presenter to remotely control all presentation applications, such as PowerPoint, on two or more computers simultaneously when connected to USB ports. All computers recognize this device as a standard USB keyboard and require no special drivers.

In addition to duties prescribed in the CAA rules and regulations, the PESCAA S-6 had the following additional responsibilities:

- Prepare, maintain, and update communication operations estimates, plans, and orders. (Orders will often be a cause for configuration management changes across the CAA)

- Monitor and make recommendations on all technical communications and information operations.

- Prepare and publish CAA communication operations Standard Operating Procedures (SOP).

- Advise the CAA organization and PESCAA staff on communication operations.

- Work closely with S-3 operations in the planning and executing virtual meetings (WebEx) and conferences.

- Plan and coordinate with CAA Liaison Officers (LNOs) regarding information systems upgrade, replacement, elimination, and integration of systems and applications.

- Coordinate with the PESCAA staff to develop information and communications plans.

- Manage the information network, obtain required services, and support mission requirements.

- Confirm and validate users' information requirements to access Red de la Conferencia de los Ejercitos Americanos (REDCEA) web page.

- Provide CAA members with direction and guidance during preparation of network plans and diagrams establishing the information network.

- Oversee communications security operations to include storage, management, distribution, inspection, and compliance.

- Provide assistance during the planning, coordination, and execution during any specialized conference.

- Ensure all audio and visual equipment is installed in accordance with the Performance Work Statement (PWS).

- Conduct audio/visual tests and equipment troubleshooting before initiation of the conference to ensure it is ready for the event.

- Ensure each interpretation radio receiver is preset to designated channel. (Channel 1: Spanish, Channel 5: English, and Channel 8: Portuguese)

- Conduct final check on the slides to ensure every presentation is in sequence according to the final script. (slides have uniformity and free of grammar/spelling errors)

- Per CAA By-Laws, Article 106.k:  Written translations on all of the discussions and documentation will be in the official languages of the CAA (Spanish, English, and Portuguese).  Slide presentations will be controlled by the S-6 team during the conference and formatted as follows:

    o Slide master size: Standard (4:3)

    o Font size for slide title: Arial (Heading) 30

    o Font size for slides: Arial 20

**Scheme of Maneuver :** PESCAA S-6 establish a robust and reliable network that allows seamless communications with all supported elements during the execution of the Preparatory Conference in Washington DC.

Internet connectivity and IT Equipment will be provided IAW contract and distributed as follows:

- Main Conference Room (3 Computers)
- Translators Room (4 Computers w/ 22" Monitors)
- PESCAA OPS Center (2 Computer & High Capacity Printer)

Cell Phones will be issued by PESCAA S-6 to facilitate command and control during the execution of their duties. Cell phones will be distributed as follows:

- Airport/Escort Team (6 Cell Phones)
- PESCAA OPS Center (1 Cell Phone)
- Transportation OIC (1 Cell phone)
- Transportation NCOIC (1 Cell Phone)
- Medic Team (1 Cell phone)

ICOM Radios will be utilized by PESCAA team for the coordination and control of activities within the Hotel during the Conference. These radios will be use for command and control between buses during the cultural event.

- PESCAA OPS Center (1 Radio)
- Medic Team (1 Radio)
- Cultural Event Team (3 Radios)

**NETWORK DIAGRAM**
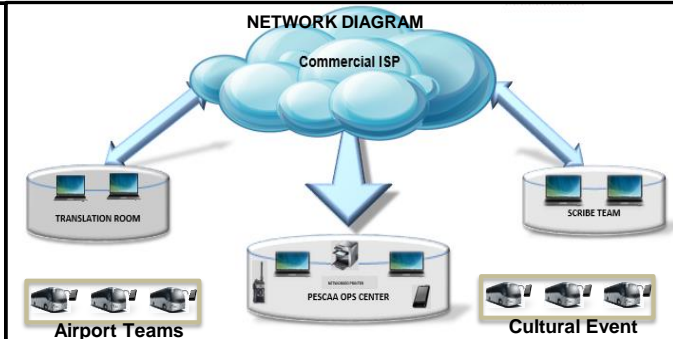


**P.A.C.E. PLAN**

| UNIT | PRIMARY | ALTERNATE | CONTINGENCY | EMERGENCY |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| OPS CENTER | DATA | PHONES | ICOM RADIO | COURIER |
| AIRPORT / ESCORT TEAMS | PHONES | ICOM RADIO | COURIER | |
| CULTURAL EVENT TEAM | PHONES | ICOM RADIO | COURIER | |
| TRANSLATION ROOM | DATA @ REDCEA WEB PAGE | CD | | |

**Priority of Signal Support:** Priority of signal support during this operation is to the PESCAA Operation Center, MEDICS Team, Escort/Airports Team, Conference Room, Translators Room and Cultural Event.

Figure 1-1. Preparatory Conference communications concept of support

The PESCAA team codified communications support processes and procedures laying a solid foundation for the next PESCAA lead. Challenges were met and overcome. The complex and rigorous environment became fertile ground for multiple lessons and best practices, which included:

Observation 1: Slide Format and Context

Discussion: The PESCAA staff conducted a lot of slide editing during the Preparatory Conference. Slide mistakes included different fonts, translation context, size, and alignment. To fix this problem, the PESCAA staff conducted slide review and made corrections during the night before the event. This worked, but proved time-consuming to the S-6 section and PESCAA staff overall.

Recommendation: Since the PESCAA already knows the sequence of events and agenda for each day, designate a working group consisting of scriptwriter, S-3, and S-6 to work together to simultaneously build the script and slides. Additionally, slides must

be translated well in advance to facilitate senior leader product review and rehearsal time.

Observation 2: Translator Team Systems

Discussion: Another issue encountered during the conference was the translators' computers. These computers were non-government systems provided by the hotel's contract. The computers came with basic, versus professional or business Microsoft software. These basic programs lessened the staff's efficiency. The team heavily relied on Google Translate instead of a proven and more efficient program that could be installed by the system administrator before the event.

Recommendation: For future events, computers utilized by the translator teams come with the additional package language from Microsoft Word. This package allows the user to conduct grammar/spelling proofing, as they write the documents.

Observation 3: Projector Screens

Discussion: As the PESCAA staff prepared for the Preparatory Conference's opening ceremony, one of the three screens was smaller than the rest. This resulted in the disparity of slides as they were displayed. Request made to the contractor to replace the smaller screen, but informed they did not have an additional screen replacement.

Recommendation: Ensure the PWS specifies all three screens be the same size. Additionally, identify any issues with projectors and screens when the contractor is conducting initial set up.

Observation 4: Cables under the Head Table

Discussion: Many cables connecting the audiovisual equipment ran under the head table impeding the president of the conference to sit properly.

Recommendation: Coordinate early with the contractor to have the head table free of cables or other obstacles.

Observation 5: Head Table Wireless Microphone

Discussion: There were instances where the head table speaker was not able to intervene or provide input during the debates due to the numbers of open microphones used simultaneously by the delegation. The delegation's microphones were set up to have only three open devices at the same time. This configuration is ideal to avoid noise feedback from the speakers, but limits the number of users wanting to speak. Recommendation: Ensure the head table has one additional wireless microphone with fresh batteries before the start of the day's event. This will allow the ability for a senior leader to intervene as they deem necessary.

## Roles and Responsibilities at the Commanders' Conference

The roles and responsibilities of the PESCAA S-6 remains the same throughout the Commanders' Conference. Mission is to plan, manage, coordinate, and deliver timely and reliable command and control, communications systems to PESCAA during the execution of, and support to multi-national and security cooperation activities.

Because of the lessons learned during the Preparatory Conference, the PESCAA S-6 conducted a reassessment of the distribution and the layout of communications equipment to enhance the execution of the Commanders' Conference. The network remained the same, however, changes to the cell phone distribution plan were made, including:

- Airport/Escort Team (26 Cell Phones)

- PESCAA OPS Center (1 Cell Phone)

- Transportation OIC (1 Cell phone)

- Transportation NCOIC (1 Cell Phone)

- Medic Team (1 Cell Phone)

Reasoning behind these adjustments was to ensure optimum support for the escort team consisting of 28 personnel. Each needed a primary means of internal and external communications with the PESCAA OPS center. As mentioned, the S-6 did a contract with Verizon for the acquisition of 30 pre- paid cell phones with unlimited text and voice minutes that facilitated the team's internal communications. The distribution of these phones was done after the "Barrowed Forces Briefing" that took place at the hotel.

A significant change implemented during the Commanders' Conference was adding display monitors on the main room floor. During the Preparatory Conference, the location of the three main screens made it difficult for some of the delegates to understand/visualize the slide meanings and then be able to follow through with the instructions. Some of the attendees had to turn sideways in order to picture the main screens. Therefore, the PESCAA S6 recommended an additional seven 52-inch monitors be brought in to avoid this issue.

In addition to the three main screens used at the Commanders' Conference, coordination was made with the Audi Visual Contractor to set the monitors in front of the delegations displaying the slides in their native language. This set up proved to be very convenient and provided an enhanced professional set up. Layout designs for both conferences are displayed below.

**Preparatory vs. Commanders' Conferences Layouts**
**Preparatory Conference Layout**

1) One of the main display screens was smaller that the rest

2) Only two monitors set up. One for the MC and the Head table

3) Wires ran under the Head Table

4) No wireless microphone for the Head Table

**Commander's Conference Layout**

1) All three screens were the same size and proportion

2) Addition of a total of 7 monitors.

3) Wires ran off the sides of Head Table

4) Addition on one wireless microphone for the Head Table

Figure 1-2. Preparatory and Commanders' Conferences layout (Photos by U.S. PESCAA team)

As final notes, it is important to mention that upon completing the Commanders' Conference the PESCAA S-6 immediately started coordinating the transferring of all CAA documents, REDCEA web page, and WebEx administration/privileges with the upcoming CAA host.

On 11 December 2017, as part of the transfer process, the PESCAA conducted a left seat/right seat transition with members of the Dominican Republic Army who volunteered to be the PESCA lead for the next the 33rd CAA Cycle. Seven members of the U.S. Army led PESCAA, with ARSOUTH Information Management Subject Matter Experts (SMEs), traveled to the Dominican Republic. Their mission focused on the following:

- Transfer the administrative and historical CAA files.

- Transfer data and network operations.

- Establish operational and logistical continuity.

- Conduct a final conditions check with U.S. forces and Embassy personnel for the two U.S. PESCAA personnel who will be reassigned under Permanent Change of Station (PCS) orders to augment the Dominican Republic led PESCAA for the 33rd CAA Cycle.



Figure 1-3.  Dominican Republic PESCAA and U.S. counterparts discussing transfer requirements in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic (Photo by U.S. PESCAA team)

The U.S. PESCAA SMEs from protocol, logistics, information technology (IT), and operations met with their 18 Dominican Republic PESCAA counterparts to ensure a seamless transition of the daily structure and operating processes involved in hosting a CAA cycle. Major General Mota, Secretary General and Colonel Cepeda, Executive Secretary led their team through the working group session to prepare for the first 33rd Cycle, CAA Conference to be held in Guatemala in April 2018.

Additionally, the U.S. PESCAA transferred web page administration receiving assistance from the ARSOUTH REDCEA web master. Training was also provided on planning and managing the High Frequency (HF) Exercise performed each cycle and the newly introduced E-Vote process for the Commanders' Conference.

The engagement culminated with MG Alcántara, Commander of the Dominican Republic Army personally visiting the U.S. delegation and touring the PESCAA headquarters. The Dominican Republic officially assumed responsibility for PESCAA operations on 22 January 2018.

Figure 1-4.  Group photo outside new PESCAA offices in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic (Photo by U.S. PESCAA team)