Critical Information

Proficiency Code: A

OPSEC is the process of identifying critical information and analyzing friendly actions attendant to military operations and activities. In other words, OPSEC denies adversaries critical information and observable indicators about friendly forces and actions. OPSEC serves to identify any unclassified activity or information that, when associated with other activities or information, can reveal protected information about friendly operations or activities. Activities disseminated in the form of a critical information list to help ensure military personnel and media are aware of non-releasable information.

OPSEC is an information-related capability (IRC) that preserves friendly essential secrecy by using a process to identify, control, and protect critical information and indicators that, if compromised, would allow adversaries or potential adversaries to identify and exploit friendly vulnerabilities leading to increased risk or potential mission, function, program, or activity failure or the loss of life. OPSEC's desired effect is to influence the adversary's behavior and actions by reducing the adversary's ability to collect and exploit critical information and indicators about friendly activities.

Protect critical information and indicators from disclosure

This includes, but is not limited to: letters, resumes, articles, books, collegiate papers, electronic mail (e-mail), social media postings, web log (blog) postings, internet message board discussions, or other forms of dissemination or documentation.

Critical Information—Specific facts about friendly intentions, capabilities, or activities vitally needed by adversaries for them to plan and act effectively to guarantee failure or unacceptable consequences for friendly mission accomplishment.

Additional Information:

AFI 10-701