

DEFENSE & GOVERNMENT CONTRACTING: REVERSING A DANGEROUS FEDERAL BUDGET CUT

PUBLIC AFFAIRS CASE STUDY

our client

Fortune 150 international government and defense contracting firm

the issue

The president's proposed annual budget slashed funding for current procurement and zeroed out future scheduled procurement of a critical product with a long history of success and clear continued need going forward.

the challenge

The country's budget environment was austere, at best. The political mood in Congress was to cut, and cut spending some more. The media embraced the constant posturing between the administration and Congress' differences, but hadn't noticed that buried in the hundreds of pages of the next year's budget bill, the administration would be ending one of the Department of Defense's most successful weapons systems.

the opportunity

The budget cut would have been detrimental to the Department of Defense, U.S. warfighters, jobs and the economy in multiple U.S. cities. Congress had a track record for supporting this program, but wasn't really aware that the administration had buried the program cut and future cancellation deep in the budget bill.

the plan

We built a multifaceted campaign starting with a counter-narrative depicting the administration as short-sighted and out of touch with our warfighters, defense leaders and the geo-political environment across the world. Simultaneously, we touted the system's track record of success and how often it was relied on by our armed forces in ways everyday Americans could understand.

We conducted an aggressive media outreach campaign to shed light on the administration's poor decision. We engaged independent defense and budget experts to examine the issue and make public statements in support of the continuation of our client's product. We also engaged a grassroots coalition of citizens that supported our troops and were politically active in their communities.

the result

In less than six months, senators and members of Congress were up in arms about the administration's cut. Media coverage of the issue was pervasive and took the tone of surprise that an administration engaged in war would make such a careless decision.

Outlets including *Reuters*, *National Journal*, Fox News (Fox & Friends, The O'Reilly Factor, On the Record with Greta Van Susteren), *Politico*, *Investor's Business Daily* and *The Sunday Times* reported on the matter. Influential legislators cited the media coverage in committee hearings when questioning administration officials and authored independent opinion pieces scolding the decision.

Ultimately, due to widespread pressure from the media and the general public, the key congressional committees authored a fix restoring funding for the program.