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FOR DOCTRINE DEVELOPMENT AND EDUCATION



AIR FORCE DOCTRINE PUBLICATION (AFDP) 3-0 OPERATIONS AND PLANNING

AIRPOWER AND THE RANGE OF MILITARY OPERATIONS

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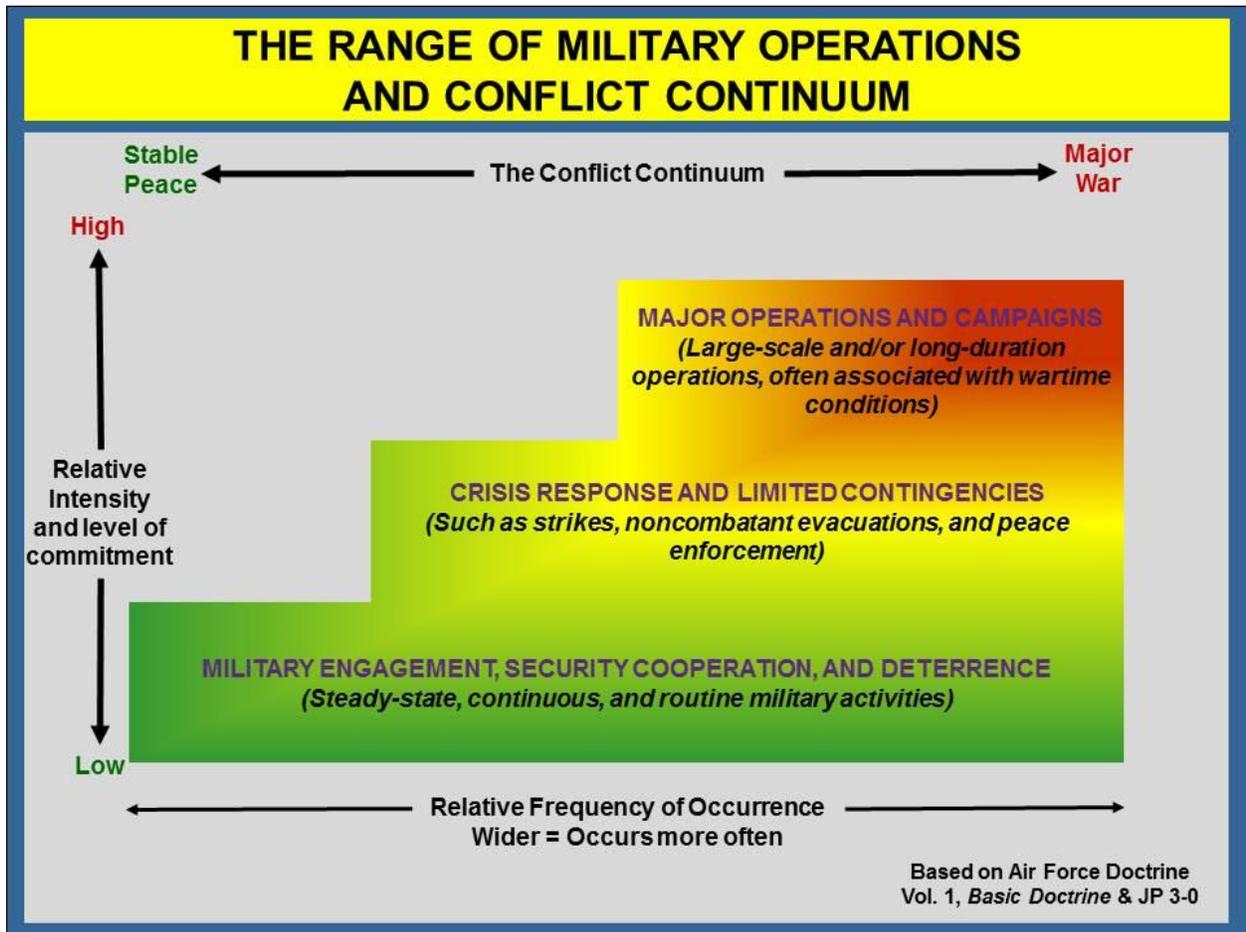
The Air Force conducts operations along a varying scale of military involvement and violence, referred to as the range of military operations (ROMO). They range from continuous and recurring operations such as [military engagement](#), security cooperation, and [deterrence](#); through smaller-scale contingencies and crisis response operations, as well as irregular warfare; to [major operations and campaigns](#) such as declared wars. Conflicts may escalate or de-escalate from one form to another. Warfighters may find that military activities like security cooperation and engagement take place simultaneously with major combat operations and irregular warfare. No two operations are alike: scope, duration, tempo, and cultural/political context vary widely. Military leaders should carefully assess the nature of their assigned missions to determine the appropriate mix of forces and discern implied missions and requirements. As military professionals, Airmen should possess the skills and apply airpower doctrine to design, plan, execute, and assess military operations across the ROMO. As an institution, the Air Force organizes, trains, and equips to conduct operations across the ROMO.

Military operations take place in and through the air, land, maritime, space, and cyberspace domains and the [information environment](#). **The Air Force exploits advantages in the air, space, and cyberspace domains to achieve [joint force commander](#) (JFC) and national objectives in all domains and the information environment.** In either a supporting or supported role, these functions can be conducted independently from, or in concert with, land and maritime operations.

THE RANGE OF MILITARY OPERATIONS AND THE CONFLICT CONTINUUM

Airpower is a vital component of successful military operations and can often provide for decisive, rapid, and more efficient attainment of enduring advantage. It has been an asymmetric advantage for the United States in many operations. Defeating enemy forces has traditionally been the most important of the tasks assigned to the military, and while that remains vitally important, national strategic guidance increasingly emphasizes the importance of preventing conflict, deterring adversaries, and shaping the operational environment so as to obtain continuing strategic advantage for the US and its allies. The Department of Defense (DOD) refers to the ongoing and recurring operations intended to accomplish this apart from the realm of war and other major operations as the steady state, and can design, plan, execute, and assess steady-state operations and activities as part of geographically-aligned theater campaigns. The strategies created to accomplish this are called theater campaign plans (TCPs). From a

Service perspective, preparation is a foremost priority during the steady state, as success in a crisis depends upon preparedness and readiness at the beginning of that crisis.



The Range of Military Operations and Conflict Continuum

The ROMO is a continuous range of operations, rather than a set of discrete and increasingly escalatory steps. Most military operations fall somewhere along this continuous range and may have attributes of more than one “step.”

Military Engagement, Security Cooperation, and Deterrence

Military Engagement, security cooperation, and deterrence establish, shape, maintain, and refine relations with other nations and domestic civil authorities. The overall objective is to protect US interests at home and abroad; this is largely achieved through preparedness, prevention, deterrence, and shaping the operational environment. These operations occur throughout the ROMO in varying degrees, may be the primary efforts during peacetime, and usually do not involve the immediate use or threat of force. Prudent use of military forces in peacetime helps keep the day-to-day tensions between nations or groups below the threshold of armed conflict and maintains US influence in foreign lands. Examples of such operations include: ¹

¹ Refer to Joint Publication (JP) 3-0, [Joint Operations](#), and other appropriate joint publications for more detailed discussion of various types of operations, as well as the general joint phasing model for major operations.

- ✦ Arms control operations.
- ✦ Counterdrug operations.
- ✦ Military-to-military contacts.
- ✦ Unilateral and multilateral exercises.
- ✦ Building partner capacity.
- ✦ Senior leader engagements with international and domestic partners.
- ✦ Security assistance.
- ✦ Shows of force.
- ✦ Demonstrations.
- ✦ Theater security package-related operations.
- ✦ National Guard Bureau State Partnership Program.

Crisis Response and Limited Contingencies

[Crisis response and limited contingency operations](#) may be single small-scale, limited-duration operations or a significant part of a major operation of extended duration involving combat. The general objectives are to protect US interests and respond appropriately to any form of limited conflict or crisis. These operations may occur during periods of slightly increased US military readiness, and the use or threat of force may be more probable. Many of these operations involve a combination of military forces and capabilities in close cooperation with other organizations. Examples of such operations include:

- ✦ [Combating terrorism](#).
- ✦ Some types of [counterproliferation](#) operations, (when arms control operations are not successful).
- ✦ [Consequence management](#) (especially of [weapons of mass destruction](#) [WMD]-related events).
- ✦ Enforcement of sanctions and maritime intercept operations.
- ✦ Enforcing exclusion zones.
- ✦ Ensuring freedom of navigation and passage, in both maritime and aerial operations, including protection of shipping and overflight.
- ✦ Ensuring freedom of action in air, space, and relevant portions of cyberspace.
- ✦ [Noncombatant evacuation operations](#).
- ✦ [Peace operations](#).

- ★ Strikes and raids.
- ★ Support to [counterinsurgency](#).
- ★ Support to insurgency operations that support US and Allied security objectives.
- ★ Recovery operations.
- ★ Foreign humanitarian assistance.
- ★ Humanitarian assistance and disaster relief.

Major Operations and Campaigns

[Major operations and campaigns](#) are large-scale, sustained combat operations to achieve national objectives and protect national interests. Such operations may place the United States in a wartime state and are normally conducted against a nation state that possesses significant military capability with the will to employ that capability in opposition to or in a manner threatening to US national security. Such operations typically involve a joint [campaign](#) comprised of multiple [phases](#). Operations DESERT STORM, ALLIED FORCE, ENDURING FREEDOM, and IRAQI FREEDOM are examples of joint campaigns. The goal is to achieve national objectives and conclude hostilities on conditions favorable to the United States and its [multinational](#) partners, generally as quickly and with as few casualties as possible, and in a manner that confers enduring strategic advantage for the United States and its partners.

Major operations and campaigns may be combined with irregular warfare, stability, and security cooperation activities, sometimes even within the same [operational area](#). Establishing conditions that confer enduring friendly advantage often requires follow-on stability operations to restore security, provide services and humanitarian relief, enable civil authority, and perform reconstruction. A fully integrated approach to international security requires the capability to conduct operations simultaneously across a broad spectrum of activities, even as part of the same operation.

CAMPAIGNS

Military operations are often linked together and described collectively as a campaign. Joint Publication 5-0, *Joint Operation Planning*, defines a campaign as a “series of related major operations aimed at achieving strategic and operational objectives within a given time and space.” While JFCs may elect to establish task forces consisting solely of one Service, it is important to note that all campaigns and operations, regardless of the Service composition of the forces that execute them, derive their authority from and fall under the command of a JFC. The Services do not conduct independent campaigns or independent operations. The ongoing theater campaigns conducted by combatant commanders and defined by TCPs shape and influence the operational environment during the steady state, and if planners successfully anticipate events within their theaters of operation, contingencies and major operations may already be planned for in branch or sequel² plans attached to the TCP. This is one of the major advantages of the

² Branches are contingency options built into the base plan used for changing the mission, orientation, or direction of movement of a force to aid success of the operation based on anticipated events, opportunities, or disruptions caused by enemy actions and reactions. Sequels are subsequent major

TCP construct, since it can provide better context and preparation for contingency and follow-on events under the umbrella of an overarching strategy.

HOMELAND OPERATIONS

The Air Force plays a significant role in [homeland operations](#). It employs airpower to assist federal, state, and local governments, as well as other branches of the [Department of Defense](#) (DOD) and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in detecting, helping preempt, responding to, mitigating, and recovering from a full spectrum of threats and incidents, man-made and natural, within the United States and its territories and possessions. Homeland operations consist of two major mission areas: homeland defense and [defense support of civil authorities](#) (DSCA), along with the integral subset mission of emergency preparedness.



Disaster relief efforts, such as the response to Hurricane Katrina, are a visible example of defense support of civil authorities in homeland operations.

While homeland operations may arguably be considered a subset within the ROMO previously described, Air Force doctrine considers these activities important enough to warrant separate discussion.

Homeland Defense

DOD defines homeland defense as “the protection of US territory, sovereignty, domestic population, and critical infrastructure against external threats and aggression.”³ Homeland defense missions include force protection actions; counterintelligence; air, space, and cyberspace warning and control; counter-terrorism; critical infrastructure protection; air, space, cyberspace, and missile defense; and information security operations. Homeland defense also includes protection of military installations and facilities within the United States. In all of these missions, DOD either acts as the designated lead federal agency, or with a high level of autonomy within the national security structure.

The most familiar Air Force role here is fulfilling North American Aerospace Defense Command’s (NORAD’s) air sovereignty mission through [defensive counterair](#). Future missions may involve the employment of “traditional” capabilities in nontraditional ways against such asymmetric threats as terrorism. In extreme cases, military forces may be directed by the President to use deadly force to prevent a terrorist attack.

operations or phases based on the possible outcomes (success, stalemate, or defeat) of the current major operation or phase. ([JP 5-0](#))

³ [Joint Publication \(JP\) 3-27, Homeland Defense](#)

Defense Support of Civil Authorities

The term DSCA denotes DOD support provided during and in the aftermath of domestic emergencies—such as terrorist attacks or major disasters. DSCA missions include, but are not limited to, preventing or defeating terrorist attacks; response to natural disasters; support to civilian law enforcement agencies; counterdrug operations; border security; and response to civil disturbances or insurrection. It also covers consequence management due to CBRN incidents, including toxic industrial chemicals and materials. In all of these missions, various federal, state, or local environments may be further complicated by the differences in duty status and authority of civilian agencies who are primarily responsible for the management of the particular incident. DOD's involvement is supportive and is normally dependent on a request from the lead agency. DSCA missions may involve operating in legally complex environments, and may be further complicated by the differences in duty status and authority between regular, Guard, and Reserve forces (contained in United States Code, Titles 10 and 32).

The military's role in domestic emergencies is well defined and, by law, is limited in scope and duration. **Military agencies temporarily support and augment, but do not replace local, state (including National Guard forces in state active duty status), and federal civilian agencies that have primary authority and responsibility for domestic disaster assistance.** Air Force contributions in DSCA operations will likely be in support of a federal agency designated by the President or as indicated in the National Response Framework.

US Air Force organization for homeland operations should be consistent with the organizational model for any other expeditionary operation. See [AFDP 3-27, *Homeland Operations*](#), for more detail.

Emergency Preparedness

Emergency preparedness activities are those planning activities undertaken to ensure DOD processes, procedures, and resources are in place to support the President and Secretary of Defense in a national security emergency. This includes continuity of operations, continuity of government functions, and the performance of threat assessments.

CROSS-DOMAIN INTEGRATION

Synergy is common to successful military operations—combat or otherwise—and can be created by controlling or influencing more than one [domain](#). Control within a single domain, particularly land, can secure success, but control within, or influence through, more than one domain usually helps achieve continuing advantage more effectively and efficiently. For example, in the Civil War, the gradual capture of southern coastal ports and the Mississippi River in the [maritime domain](#) aided the Union effort just as did defeat of Confederate armies in the field.

The advent of military aircraft made a third domain accessible, which all belligerents exploited to gain military advantages in WW I and to create decisive effects in and after WW II. Allied Combined Bomber Offensive targeting of the German transportation system in WW II was cited as one of the major reasons for the rapid German collapse during the last months of 1944 through surrender in May 1945. This is an example of the decisive use of the [air domain](#) to affect the land domain. In a similar manner, recent revolutions in spaceflight and computer technology have opened two new domains of [space](#) and [cyberspace](#) to military exploitation. Technical advances, operational best practices, and other military innovation will likely allow use of these domains in ways that permit decisive effects in the near future. Many argue that cyberspace has already reached this point. Because of the relatively low “entry cost” for adversaries, and because so much of Western economy and society depend on technology in cyberspace, cyberspace weapons may become “weapons of choice” for use *against* the United States, its partner nations, and its interests.

Air operations, of course, rely upon surface–land and maritime–basing and sustainment. This is a critical concern for commanders during contingencies far from developed basing infrastructure, or during the buildup to major operations. Developing basing options is a major focus of peacetime steady-state strategy development.

From an Airman’s perspective, several concerns remain: first, [air superiority](#) is normally a **desired state before all other combat operations. Attaining air superiority– and [air supremacy](#), when required–helps provide both the freedom to attack and freedom from attack, as well as enhancing freedom of action and maneuver. Operating without air superiority or supremacy radically increases risk to surface and air operations.** Gaining air superiority and supremacy involves both offensive and defensive missions. The [commander, Air Force forces](#) (COMAFFOR) is normally also the [joint force air component commander](#)



[Through] dominance across domains the Air Force grants joint freedom of maneuver in all warfighting domains: land, [maritime], air, space, and cyberspace. This, in turn, allows the Joint Force Commander to achieve desired outcomes across the full range of military operations: from humanitarian relief saving those in need, through preventing war via dissuasion and deterrence, to inflicting strategic paralysis on implacable opponents. Without the Air Force’s ability to present this spectrum of capabilities to the joint team in peace, crisis, and war, national security would be at risk.

*--The Nation’s Guardians:
America’s 21st Century Air Force,”
Chief of Staff of the Air Force White Paper,
29 December 2007*

(JFACC) and [area air defense commander](#) (AADC). The AADC is responsible for defensive counterair operations. The JFACC is charged with integrating [offensive](#) and [defensive counterair](#) operations to achieve air superiority for the JFC. See [AFDP 3-01, Counterair Operations](#), for more information concerning air superiority. Second, [space superiority](#) is important in maintaining unique advantages in precision applications, global [command and control](#) (C2), [situational awareness](#) and understanding, and [operational reach](#). Space superiority ensures the freedom to operate in the space domain while denying the same to an adversary. Like air superiority, space superiority involves offensive and defensive aspects. The COMAFFOR or JFACC should normally be designated the supported component commander for space control operations within a joint force. See [AFDP 3-14, Space Operations](#), for more information. Finally, [cyberspace operations](#) are also vital for maintaining advantages in *all domains*. All components of the joint force contribute to operations in cyberspace. In many cases, JFCs may retain control of cyberspace operations at their level. Cyberspace superiority ensures freedom to operate in cyberspace.
