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FOR DOCTRINE DEVELOPMENT AND EDUCATION



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THE COMMON OPERATIONS FRAMEWORK

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Although the [range of military operations](#) (ROMO) is a continuum that extends from continuous and recurring operations, such as security cooperation during peacetime, to major combat operations in war, there are some significant differences between the focus of strategy during steady-state conditions and the focus during contingencies and major operations. During steady state, strategy focuses on shaping the environment for regional and global stability, deterring aggression, and preventing conflict. Time horizons are thus usually much longer and considerations of readiness, budgeting, and the training and equipping of forces—all of which are outside the scope of doctrine—impact strategy significantly. Contingencies and major operations are the traditional subject of military strategy and doctrine, and thus military decision-making processes described in planning and operations doctrine have focused upon them.

Nonetheless, operations in recent decades have shown that there is significant common ground between steady-state and contingency conditions, and there are considerable advantages to designing coherent and comprehensive strategies for shaping the actual steady-state environment. Potential contingencies and major operations are then considered [branches](#) to combatant commanders' overarching theater¹ or global² campaign plans. Contingency planning and steady-state planning employ a common logical approach and process.

A common framework of processes helps to foster coherence in Air Force strategy creation by:

- ✦ Creating explicit linkages to national objectives and desired end states.
- ✦ Encouraging continuity in thinking used to design and plan operations, regardless of where they occur in the ROMO, whether during steady-state or contingency operations.
- ✦ Providing a common method for commanders and staff elements to use in designing and planning contingencies as logical follow-ons to ongoing operations.
- ✦ Encouraging logical linkages between resources needed for ongoing operations and those to be flowed in to support emerging contingencies.

¹ In the case of geographic combatant commanders.

² For global functional combatant commanders.

The common framework for operations is broken into the following general considerations:

- ✦ Fundamentals of operational design, including discussion of the elements and methods of operational design, the coercion continuum as a practical design construct, and additional considerations specific to airpower.
 - ✦ General planning considerations, including discussions on Air Force planning in the context of broader joint planning and the effects-based approach to planning.
 - ✦ General execution considerations.
 - ✦ Fundamentals of assessment, including discussions on assessing strategy in general, assessment criteria, assessment measures and indicators, and assessment interpretation.
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