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FOR DOCTRINE DEVELOPMENT AND EDUCATION



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

STEADY-STATE OPERATIONS: GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

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Even though fighting and winning the nation's wars is the primary justification for a standing and capable military force, that same force shares in the responsibility to shape the environment for regional and global stability, deter aggression, and prevent conflict. If the US and its allies are unsuccessful in shaping, deterring, and preventing, the Air Force must be ready to respond in any manner directed by national leadership.

The nation's emphasis on shaping and preventing predates the establishment of the Air Force, but significantly expanded with the 1994 *National Security Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement*. The Department of Defense (DOD) implementation of a national engagement strategy accelerated again in 2008 with the publication of new *Guidance for Employment of the Force (GEF)* and *Joint Strategic Capabilities Plan*. In turn, DOD Directive 5100.01, *Functions of the DOD and Its Major Components*, assigned specific functions to the Air Force related to shaping, preventing, and deterring. The 2015 GEF institutionalized the term "steady-state" to concisely describe this portion of the range of military operations.

While many military decision-making processes are common to operations in steady-state and contingency conditions, there are some considerations unique to the steady-state. The Air Force implements steady-state operations, actions, and activities through its Service components to combatant commands, supporting [joint force commander's](#) steady state plans, and through the Secretary of the Air Force's Office of International Affairs.

Just as Airmen should understand the nature and consequences of war, they should understand the nature, significance, and consequences associated with operations during the steady state. As with all military operations, success in the steady state requires Airmen with competence in design, planning, execution, and assessment. Although the core principles of steady-state design, planning, execution, and assessment are similar to those used in crisis situations, Airmen should be attentive and practiced in the differences.
