Military operations slide along an imprecise scale of violence and scale of military involvement, from theater-wide major operations and campaigns; to smaller scale contingencies and crisis response operations; to engagement, security cooperation, and deterrence (see figure, “The Range of Military Operations”). No two operations are alike; scope, duration, tempo, and political context vary widely. Some operations may even change from one form to another, either escalating or de-escalating; several may exist simultaneously. Military leaders carefully assess the nature of the missions they may be assigned, not only to properly determine the appropriate mix of forces but also to discern implied requirements. Some operations involve open combat between regular forces; in others, combat may be tangential to the main effort. In some operations, the US military’s contribution may not involve combat at all; simply providing an organizational framework for an interagency force and key elements of infrastructure may be all that’s required.
Military operations vary in purpose, scale, risk, and intensity. They include relatively benign, routine, and recurring military activities during peacetime; specific combat and non-combat responses to contingencies and crises as they occur; and less frequent, large-scale combat operations typical of wartime conditions. (Adapted from JP 3-0)

The Range of Military Operations

For detailed discussion on the ROMO, see Annex 3-0, *Operations and Planning*, and Joint Publication 1, *Doctrine for the Armed Forces of the United States*.

Related discussion includes the following topics:

- A discussion of the Clausewitzian nature of war.
- An overview of the relationship between traditional and irregular war.
- An overview of the role of culture.
- A review of the strategic, operational, and tactical levels of war.
- An introduction of steady state operations.