



ECONOMY OF FORCE

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“Economy of force” is one of the principles of war.

Economy of force is the judicious employment and distribution of forces. Its purpose is to allocate minimum essential resources to secondary efforts. This principle calls for the rational use of force by selecting the best mix of air, space, and cyberspace capabilities. To ensure overwhelming combat power is available, maximum effort should be devoted to primary objectives. At the [operational level of war](#), commanders ensure that any effort made towards secondary objectives does not degrade achievement of the larger operational or strategic objectives. This principle requires Airmen to maintain a broader operational view even as they seek to obtain clearly articulated objectives and priorities.

Economy of force may require a commander to establish a balance in the application of [airpower](#) between attacking, defending, delaying, or conducting other operations such as [information operations](#), depending on the importance of the area or the priority of the objective or objectives. Also, priorities may shift rapidly; friendly troops in contact might drive a change in priority from one type of mission (e.g., [interdiction](#)) to another (e.g., [close air support](#)). Although this principle suggests the use of overwhelming force in one sense, it also recommends guarding against the “overkill” inherent in the use of more force than reasonably necessary. This is particularly relevant when excessive force can diminish the [legitimacy](#) and support for an operation.