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RESTRAINT

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“Restraint” is one of the “additional principles of operations.”

Restraint is the disciplined application of military force appropriate to the situation. Commanders should recognize that in some types of operations, use of more force than the minimum that is reasonably necessary (even though under or at the maximum permissible) may lead to escalation to a higher intensity conflict; could adversely affect efforts to gain or maintain [legitimacy](#); and may impede the attainment of both short- and long-term goals.

Air component commanders should begin developing a force structure by outlining the necessary capabilities needed for an operation and then follow up by deploying the appropriate “tailored” air, space, and cyberspace force mix. In order to maintain effective security while also exercising restraint, commanders should develop very clear rules on the use of force and [rules of engagement](#) (ROE). ROE for [contingency operations](#) often are more restrictive, detailed, and sensitive to political concerns than in sustained combat operations. Moreover, these rules may change frequently during operations. For all operations, Airmen should understand that restraint in the use of force is appropriate and more easily justified. However, restraint does not preclude the ability to use armed force, both lethal and nonlethal, when necessary in self-defense.