THE RANGE OF MILITARY OPERATIONS

Last Updated: 09 November 2012

Airpower remains a vital component of successful military operations and decisive, rapid, and more efficient attainment of continuing advantage, even if smaller-scale contingency operations or deterrence measures fail and a crisis escalates into major combat operations. It has been an asymmetric advantage for the United States in many cases. Defeating enemy forces has traditionally been the most important of the tasks assigned to the military. However, as more vital national interests come to be at stake in "non-traditional" contingencies, the US military may become more deeply involved in the various types of contingencies, such as irregular warfare (IW), security cooperation (SC), stability, and civil support operations. The figure in this section illustrates the range of military operations (ROMO), its relationship to the conflict continuum, and the relative frequency and intensity of operations.

Engagement, Security Cooperation, and Deterrence Operations

Engagement, SC, and deterrence operations establish, shape, maintain, and refine relations with other nations and domestic civil authorities. The general objective is to protect US interests at home and abroad. They occur throughout the entire ROMO in varying degrees, may be the primary efforts during periods of normal US readiness, and usually do not involve the immediate use or threat of force. Prudent use of military forces in peacetime helps keep the day-to-day tensions between nations or groups below the threshold of armed conflict and maintains US influence in foreign lands. Examples of such operations include: [1]

Arms control operations.

Counterdrug operations.

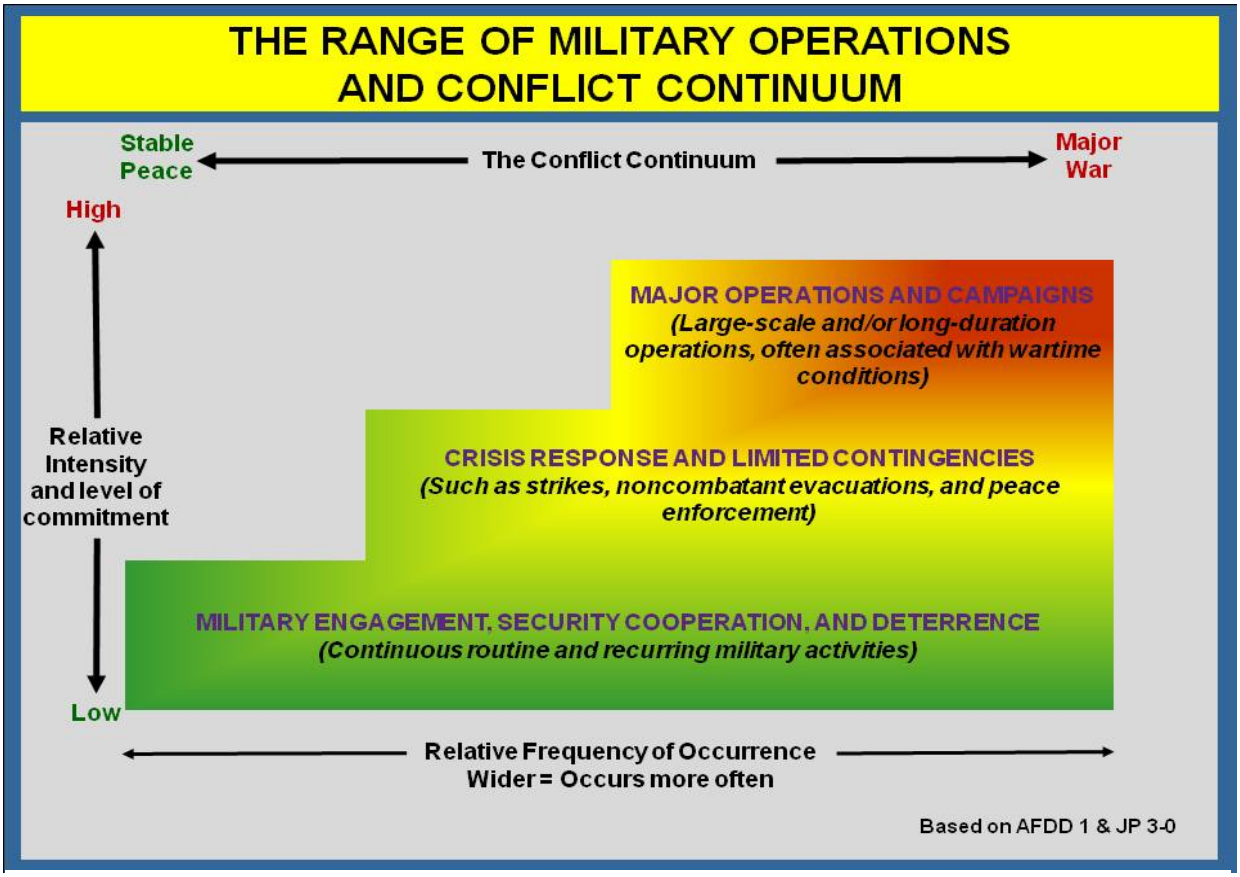
Foreign humanitarian assistance.

Military-to-military contacts.

Recovery operations.

[1] Refer to Joint Publication (JP) 3-0, *Joint Operations*, and other appropriate joint publications for more detailed discussion of various types of operations, as well as the general joint phasing model for major operations.

Unilateral and multilateral exercises.



The Range of Military Operations and Conflict Continuum

Contingencies and Crisis Response Operations

Contingencies and crisis response operations may be single small-scale, limited-duration operations or a significant part of a major operation of extended duration involving combat. The general objectives are to protect US interests and prevent surprise attack or further conflict. These operations may occur during periods of slightly increased US military readiness, and the use or threat of force may be more probable. Many of these operations involve a combination of military forces and capabilities in close cooperation with other organizations. Examples of such operations include:

Combating terrorism.

Some types of counterproliferation operations, in the event that arms control operations are not successful.

Consequence management (especially of weapons of mass destruction [WMD]-related events).

Enforcement of sanctions and maritime intercept operations.

Enforcing exclusion zones.

Ensuring freedom of navigation and passage, in both maritime and aerial operations, including protection of shipping and overflight.

Ensuring freedom of action in air, space, and relevant portions of cyberspace.

Noncombatant evacuation operations.

Peacekeeping operations.

Peace enforcement operations.

Show of force operations.

Strikes and raids.

Support to counterinsurgency.

Support to insurgency operations that support US and Allied security objectives.

Major Combat Operations

Major operations and campaigns are large-scale, sustained combat operations to achieve national objectives and/or protect national interests. Such operations may place the United States in a wartime state and are normally conducted against a nation state that possesses significant military capability with the will to employ that capability in opposition to or in a manner threatening to US national security. Such operations typically involve a joint campaign comprised of multiple phases. Operations DESERT STORM, ALLIED FORCE (OAF), OEF, and IRAQI FREEDOM (OIF) are examples of campaigns. The goal is to achieve national objectives and conclude hostilities on conditions favorable to the United States and its multinational partners, generally as quickly, with as few casualties as possible, and in a manner that conveys continuing strategic advantage for the United States and its partners.

Major combat operations (MCOs) may be combined with IW, stability, and SC activities, sometimes even within the same operational area. Establishing conditions that convey continuing friendly advantage often requires follow-on stability operations to restore security, provide services and humanitarian relief, enable civil authority, and perform reconstruction. A fully integrated approach to international security requires the capability to conduct operations simultaneously across a broad spectrum of activities, even as part of the same operation.

Traditional Warfare

Traditional warfare entails primarily force-on-force confrontation of conventional military forces (although it also extends to encompass the use of nuclear weapons). The focus of traditional war is typically on defeating an enemy government (or other ruling entity) and its strategy, by defeating its fielded military forces and/or engaging the enemy government's control mechanisms directly with military force. Traditional warfare typically takes place within the context of major operations and campaigns and can be viewed as a subset or type of MCO. Operation DESERT STORM and the opening phases of OIF are examples of traditional warfare.

Irregular Warfare

The overwhelming US dominance in recent MCOs and other campaigns has made it highly unlikely that most adversaries would choose to fight the United States in the traditional, force-on-force manner. Thus, for relatively weaker powers (including non-state entities), IW has become an attractive, if not the only, option. Adaptive adversaries such as terrorists, insurgents, and criminal networks as well as nation states, may increasingly resort to irregular forms of warfare as effective ways to challenge US military strength. In IW, the focus of effort for both friendly and adversary actors is on influencing a target population and its government or other controlling entity whether in support or opposition. IW may constitute a major operation or campaign, as coalition efforts in OEF and the later phases of OIF demonstrated.

IW favors the indirect approach to effectively counter asymmetric advantages and erode the adversary's power, influence, and will over a population. Adversaries may employ violent asymmetric attacks such as suicide bombers, improvised explosive devices, and chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) attacks, to counter our airpower advantage. The indirect approach may still employ the full range of military power to counter asymmetric attacks by developing responses that fully leverage our asymmetric advantage especially in areas such as global intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR), cyberspace, and space.

IW traditionally consists of five principal activities. Airmen should be prepared to conduct all of them sequentially, in parallel, or in blended form as part of a coherent campaign strategy to prevail in IW. These include: unconventional warfare, counterinsurgency, counterterrorism, stability operations, and foreign internal defense (FID). There are many related activities that airpower may also contribute to, such as ISR, military information support operations (MISO), civil-military operations, counterintelligence, and support to law enforcement, all of which may aid in countering irregular threats. Many of the operations are conducted during peacetime engagement, outside the context of IW or any other type of open conflict, in order to build or perpetuate international partnerships to prevent conflict.

The unique perspective that Airmen bring to a conflict is as relevant in IW as in traditional conflicts. Without the capabilities of airpower, other forces would be limited in their ability to locate opposing forces and take necessary action against them. Many of the skills and capabilities developed for use in traditional combat operations are also invaluable in conducting IW. However, Airmen should understand that IW is not a lesser included case of traditional warfare, but a different type of activity, conducted for different aims. Furthermore, IW may be conducted as a prelude to, in conjunction with, or after major combat operations. IW may also be conducted independently of major combat operations within the same theater. Many traditional Air Force skills and capabilities are transferrable to IW, but Airmen should understand that the conditions, environment, center(s) of gravity, and objectives may significantly differ from those of major combat, and that seemingly tactical actions and decisions can have strategic consequences even more readily than in traditional war.

The Air Force integrates with the joint force to prevent, deter, disrupt, and defeat irregular threats. In turn, the joint force works in concert with other governmental agencies, multinational partners, and host nations to understand the situation in depth, integrate plans and actions, and continually assess and adapt their approach in response to the dynamic and complex nature of the problem. This is achieved through a sustained and balanced approach aimed at both the threats themselves, as well as the population and the causes and conditions that give rise to the threats. The goal is to enhance the local partner's legitimacy and to influence the population by addressing the root causes of conflict and building the partner's capacity to provide security, good governance, and economic development. For more information on USAF IW operations refer to Annex 3-22, *Foreign Internal Defense*.

Disaster relief efforts, such as the response to Hurricane Katrina, are a very visible example of defense support of civil authorities in homeland operations.

Homeland Operations

The Air Force plays a significant role in homeland operations. It employs airpower to assist federal, state, and local governments, as well as other branches of the Department of Defense (DOD) and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in detecting, helping preempt, respond to, mitigate, and recover from a full spectrum of threats and incidents, man-made and natural, within the United States and its territories and possessions. Homeland operations consist of three major mission areas:

homeland defense, defense support of civil authorities (DSCA), and emergency preparedness.

While homeland security operations may arguably be considered a subset within the ROMO previously described, Air Force doctrine considers these activities important enough to warrant separate discussion.

Homeland Defense

DOD defines homeland defense as "the protection of US territory, sovereignty, domestic population, and critical infrastructure against external threats and aggression."[2] Homeland defense missions include force protection actions; counterintelligence; air, space, and cyberspace warning and control; counter-terrorism; critical infrastructure protection; air, space, cyberspace, and missile defense; and information security operations. Homeland defense also includes protection of military installations and facilities within the United States. In all of these missions, DOD either acts as the designated lead federal agency, or with a high level of autonomy within the national security structure.

The most familiar Air Force role here is fulfilling North American Aerospace Defense Command's (NORAD's) air sovereignty mission through defensive counterair. Future missions may involve the employment of "traditional" capabilities in nontraditional ways against such asymmetric threats as terrorism. In extreme cases, military forces may be directed by the President to use deadly force to prevent a terrorist attack.

Defense Support of Civil Authorities

The term DSCA denotes DOD support provided during and in the aftermath of domestic emergencies—such as terrorist attacks or major disasters. DSCA missions include, but are not limited to, preventing or defeating terrorist attacks; response to natural disasters; support to civilian law enforcement agencies; counterdrug operations; border security; and response to civil disturbances or insurrection. It also covers consequence management due to CBRN incidents, including toxic industrial chemicals and materials. In all of these missions, various federal, state, or local civilian agencies are primarily responsible for the management of the particular incident. DOD's involvement is supportive and is normally dependent on a request from the lead agency. DSCA missions may involve operating in legally complex environments, and may be further complicated by the differences in duty status and authority between regular, Guard, and Reserve forces (contained in United States Code, Titles 10 and 32).[3]

The military's role in domestic emergencies is well defined and, by law, is limited in scope and duration. **Military agencies temporarily support and augment, but do not replace local, state (including National Guard forces in state active duty status), and federal civilian agencies that have primary authority and**

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[2] Joint Publication (JP) 3-27, *Homeland Defense*.
[3] See Annex 3-27 for more detail.

responsibility for domestic disaster assistance. Air Force contributions in DSCA operations will likely be in support of a Federal agency designated by the President or as indicated in the National Response Framework.

US Air Force organization for homeland operations should be consistent with the organizational model for any other expeditionary operation. See Annex 3-27, *Homeland Operations*, for more detail.

Emergency Preparedness

Emergency preparedness activities are those planning activities undertaken to ensure DOD processes, procedures, and resources are in place to support the President and SecDef in a national security emergency. This includes continuity of operations, continuity of government functions, and the performance of threat assessments.