

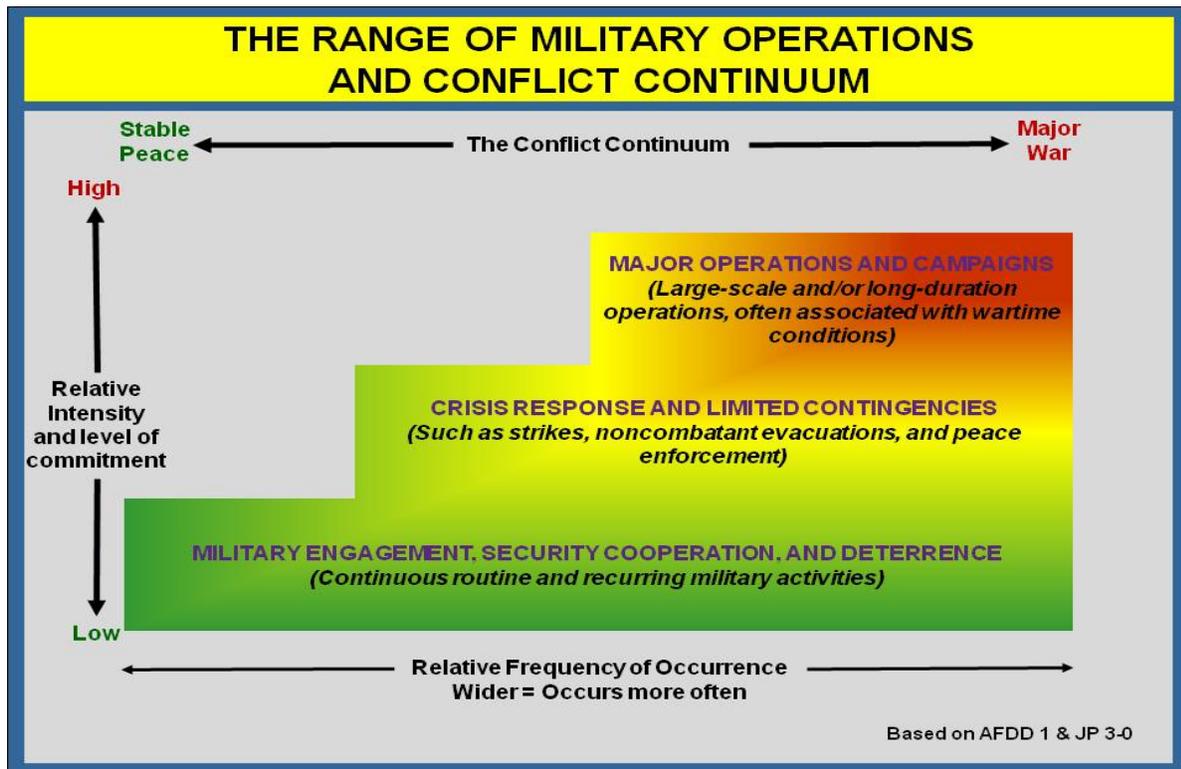


ANNEX 3-05 SPECIAL OPERATIONS

AFSOF ACROSS THE RANGE OF MILITARY OPERATIONS (ROMO)

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Special operations (SO) vary in scope, purpose, and combat intensity. A fundamental construct that provides context to the intensity of conflict that may occur during joint military activities is the ROMO: from recurring military engagement, security cooperation, and deterrence activities (typically referred to as peacetime engagement), to crisis response and limited contingency operations (low to high), and if necessary, to major operations and campaigns (high intensity) as depicted in figure titled Range of Military Operations.



Range of Military Operations

Military Engagement, Security Cooperation, and Deterrence. These ongoing activities establish, shape, maintain, and refine relations with other nations. Special operations forces (SOF) conducts engagement activities that support the geographic combatant commanders (GCC), US country teams, and other government agencies. These activities shape the operational environment to keep day-to-day tensions between nations or groups below the threshold of armed conflict. In addition, SOF seeks to significantly enhance situational

awareness in order to foresee, derail, or forestall crises. During these operations, Air Force special operations forces (AFSOF) could support a range of activities to include, but not limited to foreign internal defense, security force assistance, counterinsurgency, counter-terrorism, or unconventional warfare activities.

Crisis Response and Limited Contingency Operations. A crisis response or limited contingency operation can be a single small-scale, limited-duration operation or a significant part of a major operation of extended duration involving combat. SOF provides the capability to rapidly respond to crises of limited scale. SOF roles vary from assessment to conflict resolution. Responding to crises and addressing limited contingencies frequently involve both SOF and conventional forces (CF) and requires detailed collaboration, planning, and execution. Examples of AFSOF participation during these operations occurred during the United States' responses after devastating earthquakes in Haiti and Japan, and during Operation ODYSSEY DAWN in Libya.

Major Operations and Campaigns. US leadership may decide to conduct a major operation or campaign involving large-scale combat. In such cases, the general goal is to prevail against the enemy as quickly as possible, conclude hostilities, and establish conditions favorable to the US, its multinational partners, and the host nation (HN). For large scale efforts, SOF contribute by conducting activities that support the [joint force commander](#) (JFC) throughout the campaign. Most recently, AFSOF played key roles during major combat operations in Iraq and Afghanistan.

SO provide options, which in appropriate circumstances, can prove to be the most viable means of achieving certain objectives. While SOF can be applied tactically, commanders and planners should focus SO on strategic and operational objectives and end states to maximize effectiveness. [Combatant commanders](#) (CCDR) may leverage the [theater special operations command](#) to ensure full integration of SOF capabilities when developing theater plans. SO are most effective when they have sufficient time (sometimes months to years) to conduct pre-crisis activities, establish relationships, and build partner SOF capacity as part of shaping operations ([Phase 0](#)) with partners within theater campaign and contingency plans. Longer term preparations for SO provide options for decision makers in times of crisis that would otherwise not be available. Also, Phase 0 SO preparations may provide situational awareness and understanding that permit identification of a potential crisis prior to requiring a US military response, thus allowing a whole-of-government solution to be applied to de-escalate the situation through mediation or by dissuading, deterring, or disrupting the parties involved.

The President designates national objectives and sanctions the military means to achieve them. While most SO are conducted in support of a CCDR, certain SO may be conducted under the control of the President or SecDef.

Theater objectives are established by each GCC, based on national strategic guidance, and are an integral part of a theater campaign plan. The GCC should consider integrating SO to support the theater campaign plan and other theater plans.

Operational objectives established by subordinate JFC support theater objectives and lead directly to theater success. SO provide the JFC with a flexible option for crisis response to achieve operational objectives.

When required to achieve the JFC's objectives, SO may be conducted in support of CF and vice versa. Keys to achieving effective CF and SOF integration include:

- ★ Exchange of liaison and control elements are critical when CF and SOF conduct operations in the same operational area against the same objectives.
 - ★ A thorough understanding of a unit's capabilities and limitations that enhances integration and interoperability planning between CF and SOF.
 - ★ During mission planning, consideration of how to integrate CF and SOF maneuver elements. Detailed planning and execution coordination is required throughout the process.
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