



CHAPTER THREE: THE RANGE OF MILITARY OPERATIONS

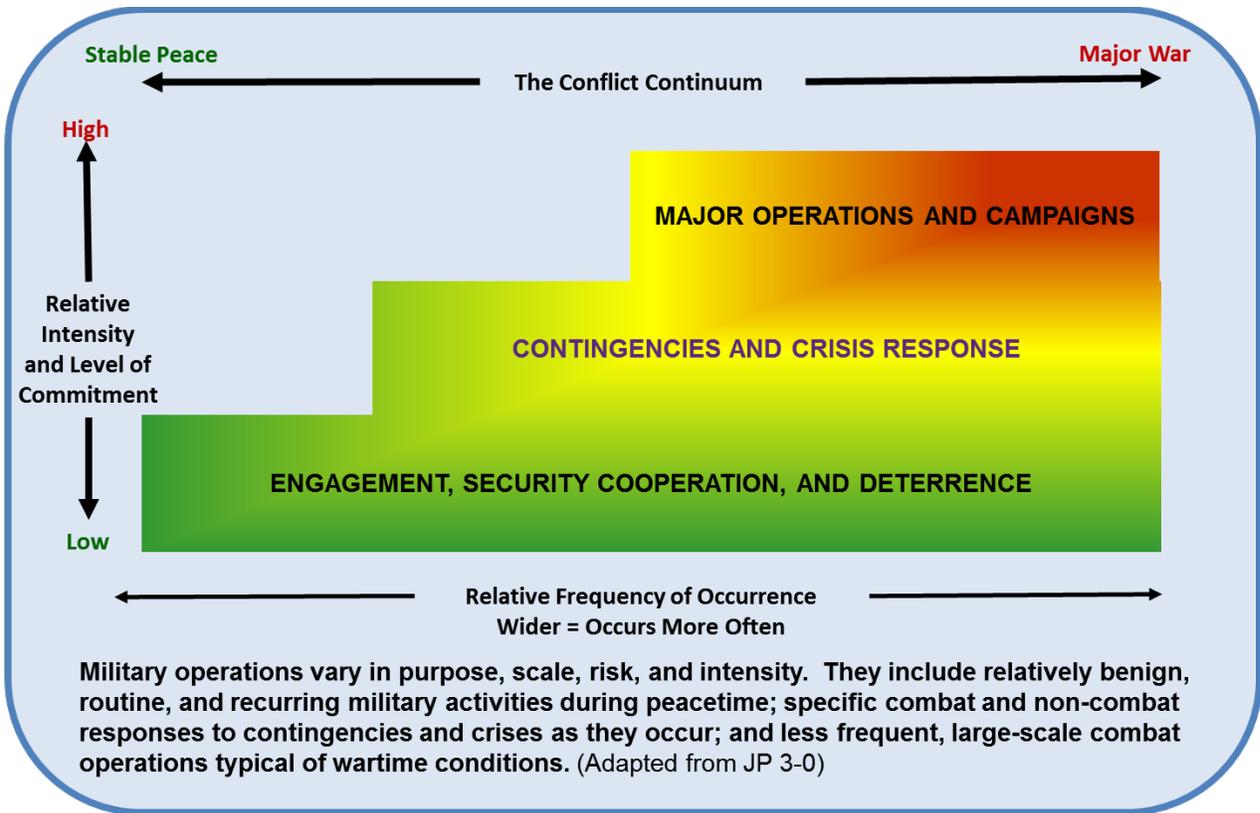
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Every art has its rules and maxims. One must study them: theory facilitates practice. The lifetime of one man is not long enough to enable him to acquire perfect knowledge and experience. Theory helps to supplement it; it provides a youth with premature experience and makes him skillful also through the mistakes of others. In the profession of war the rules of the art are never violated without drawing punishment from the enemy, who is delighted to find us at fault.

— Frederick the Great



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.



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](#).
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