Codebook for Militarized Interstate Confrontation Names (MICnames) Dataset, 1816-2014

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This document describes the Militarized Interstate Confrontation Names (MICnames) Dataset, 1816-2014. We provide names for more than 500 confrontations in our conflict datasets, including the approximately 75 Correlates of War war names.

Date: July 14, 2023

Citation

We ask that users of this dataset cite the following manuscript and note the version number of the data they are using in their study:

- Gibler, D. M., and Miller, S. V. (2023). The Militarized Interstate Confrontation Dataset, 1816-2014. Journal of Conflict Resolution, doi:10.1177/00220027221104704.

Rationale for a MICnames Dataset

Many researchers have asked for text identifiers of the Militarized Interstate Confrontation (MIC) cases to help identify particular conflicts. For example, the United States and Soviet Union were involved in several confrontations in 1961 and 1962. MIC#3361 was a show of force by the United States that began sometime in December 1961 when the US sent helicopters and advisors to Vietnam. MIC#1353 is the dispute that starts CoW War #170, called The Second Laotian War Phase 2 of 1968-1973. MIC#0061 is the Cuban Missile Crisis. Dataset users searching for the Cuban Missile Crisis would have a difficult time of identifying the conflict based on country codes and years. Therefore, we have named as many MIC cases as we thought useful.

The Militarized Interstate Confrontations Dataset includes all cases of threats, displays, and/or use of force by one state against another state in the international system between 1816 and 2014. However, only a small portion of these cases warranted naming the confrontations by contemporaries or historians. Low-level, not-very-interesting conflicts dominate the MIC data. There are exceptions, and we have named those cases. We present the MICnames dataset with names of 509 confrontation cases. This group comprises over 25% of the overall MIC cases.

Our first naming convention was to simply import the Correlates of War War Dataset names as CoW-named conflicts in order to ease comparisons across datasets. This required identifying the associated MID/confrontation for each war, which is something that CoWMID does not do. We then went through the dataset and named all confrontations with 100 or more battle fatalities as well as cases we thought were interesting in some way, whether because of the potential for escalation, historical importance, uniqueness of the case, or some other reason. Our names are often forced when no noteworthy events occur in the confrontation though fatalities are large, as in the case of "Nationalist versus Communist Chinese Fighting (1951-1952)." In these cases we tried to be informative regarding what took place.

Data Files Associated with the MICnames Dataset

We provide the following files for users of the MIC Data. We advertise the data of interest in the list below first as the more accessible comma-separated values file (.csv), but we also have the same data available in a Stata data file format (.dta) or an R serialized data frame (.rds). Please note that we are constantly revising these data; users should report the version number of the dataset used in any research. Future releases will come with a text file summarizing changes to the data.

- `micnames-[version].csv`: This is the MICnames dataset with version number.

Variables in the MICnames Dataset

There are only three variables in the dataset:

- `micnum`: The confrontation number for each case, as originally established by CoWMID for each case. Note that we have also added numerous confrontation cases that are not in the CoW data as disputes. These cases begin with `micnum` values in the 9000s to demonstrate completely new cases.

- `micname`: The alphanumeric name of the confrontation given by either the CoWWar data coders or us. Note that all names include the years at the end of the name; names given by CoWWar provide dates without parentheses.

- `version`: The MICnames version number. We are constantly reviewing and updating our datasets, and we ask users of our data to always report which version number of the data they are using in their research. We hope to add many additional MICnames in the future.

How to Use the Dataset

We first should note one word of caution regarding use of this dataset. The presence of a name for a confrontation does not necessarily imply that the conflict was historically important or had a high-risk of escalation. In many cases we were able to name low-level conflicts because of some aspect that was historically interesting. For example, MIC#0321 is named "Pershing's Pancho Villa Expedition (1916-1917)" because that describes the conflict well. John Pershing organized a punitive expedition and entered Mexico, routing Villa's revolutionaries. Though border tensions were occasionally high at the start of the twentieth century, war was not imminent in this case. Comparing the case to, for example, the Cuban Missile Crisis (MIC#0061) is not warranted.

We encourage researchers to use this dataset to identify interesting cases to explore. For full descriptions of each confrontation, see Gibler (2018).

References

Gibler, Douglas M. 2018. *International Conflicts, 1816-2010: Militarized Interstate Dispute Narratives*. Vol. 2 Rowman & Littlefield.

Gibler, Douglas M and Steven V Miller. 2023. "The Militarized Interstate Confrontation Dataset, 1816-2014." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* p. 00220027221104704.