A Wiki-based Dataset of Military Operations with Novel Strategic Technologies (MONSTr)

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Abstract

Research on strategies and force structures in modern warfare is prolific, but siloed. While some examine boots on the ground, others focus on aerial bombing or unpiloted platforms. Consequently, most studies focus on the effects of one approach, seldom considering it in lieu of or conjunction with others. Furthermore, there is less knowledge on the origins and implementations of these strategic choices analyzed in isolation. The primary reason for these gaps lies with data limitations. This paper introduces a comprehensive dataset on the universe of United States military interventions from 1989-2021 from a single source: Wikipedia. Using automated extraction techniques on its two structured knowledge databases—Wikidata and DBpedia—we uncover information about nearly every post-1989 military intervention described in existing academic datasets plus 425 additional operations. The data we introduce offers unprecedented coverage and granularity that enables analysis of myriad factors associated with how, when, and where the United States conducts military interventions. We describe the data collection process, demonstrate its contents and validity, and discuss its potential applications to existing theories about force structure design and strategy in war.

Keywords: military intervention, use of force, dataset