

# Defining Conflicts and Disputes

POSC 3610 – International Conflict

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# Conflict as Process

Overall message: think of conflict as process.

- Processes are multiple, not a phenomenon that is strictly present or absent.
- He critiques a myopic view of conflict that is confined to single, isolated stages, contingent on research question.

# Phases of Conflict

Diehl suggests four phases to inter-state conflict.

1. Initiation
2. Escalation
3. War Dynamics
4. Post-War

# Initiation

A conflict is started when two states enter into a militarized interstate dispute

- We'll note later: this is the first *threat, display, or use* of military force.

## **Japanese Navy Criticizes U.S. Activity in Pacific**

*New York Times (1923-Current file); Mar 28, 1940;*

ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The New York Times (1851-2008)

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## **Japanese Navy Criticizes U. S. Activity in Pacific**

**By The United Press.**

**TOKYO, Thursday, March 28—**  
Rear Admiral Masao Kanazawa, spokesman of the Naval Ministry, said today that American naval manoeuvres in the western Pacific would be open to criticism as indicating aggression toward Japan.

Admiral Kanazawa said also that the Japanese Navy was observing with grave concern the reported increase of naval air forces in the Philippines.

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## The Conclusion of MID#0339



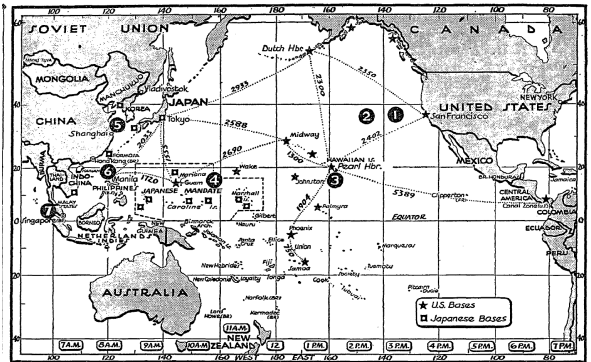
# The Conclusion of MID#0339

## GUAM BOMBED; ARMY SHIP IS SUNK: U.S. Fliers Head North From Manila -- ...

By FRANK L. KLUCKHOHN Special to THE NEW YORK TIMES.

New York Times (1923-Current file); Dec 8, 1941; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The New York Times

pg. 1



### PACIFIC OCEAN: THEATRE OF WAR INVOLVING UNITED STATES, AND ITS ALLIES

Shortly after the outbreak of hostilities an American ship sent a distress call from (1) and a United States Army transport carrying lumber was torpedoed at (2). The most important action was at Hawaii (3), where Japanese planes bombed the great Pearl Harbor base. Also attacked was Guam (4). From Manila (6) United States bombers roared northward, while some parts of the Philippines were raided, as was Hong Kong, to the northwest. At Shanghai (5) a British gunboat was sunk and an American gunboat seized. To the south, in the Malaya area (7), the British bombed Japanese ships, Tokyo forces attempted landings on British territory and Singapore underwent an air raid. Distances between key Pacific points are shown on the map in statute miles.

## GUAM BOMBED; ARMY SHIP IS SUNK

U. S. Fliers Head North From Manila—  
Battleship Oklahoma Set Afire by  
Torpedo Planes at Honolulu

## 104 SOLDIERS KILLED AT FIELD IN HAWAII

President Fears 'Very Heavy Losses' on Oahu—  
Churchill Notifies Japan That a  
State of War Exists

By FRANK L. KLUCKHOHN

Special to THE NEW YORK TIMES.

WASHINGTON, Monday, Dec. 8—Sudden and unexpected attacks on Pearl Harbor, Honolulu, and other United States possessions in the Pacific early yesterday by the Japanese air force and navy plunged the United States and Japan into active war.

The initial attack in Hawaii, apparently launched by torpedo-carrying bombers and submarines, caused widespread damage and death. It was quickly followed by others. There were unconfirmed reports that German raiders participated in the attacks.

Guam also was assaulted from the air, as were Davao, on the island of Mindanao, and Camp John Hay, in Northern Luzon, both in the Philippines. Lieut. Gen. Douglas MacArthur, commanding the United States Army of the Far East, reported there was little damage, however.

# Origins of Prominent Conflicts

- World War I: Austria threat to declare war after 10 demands to Serbia.
- World War II (Europe): UK/France threat to Germany re: Polish independence.
- World War II (Pacific): A U.S. show of force regarding Japanese encroachment on the Dutch East Indies.
- Gulf War I: Stop slant drilling, or else...

Note: we operationalize initiation as first threat, display, or use of force.



# Escalation

This phase is post-initiation when two states are at risk of spiraling toward war. Consider July Crisis:

- Austria delivers 10 demands to Serbia.
- Serbia momentarily acquiesces, but negotiates for five days.
- Serbia and Russia mobilize.
- Germany supports Austria, threatens Russia.
- France threatens both Central Powers.

Austria declares war against Serbia. Russia declares war five days later. Germany declares war against Russia. France declares war against both Austria and Germany. UK joins them.

- WWI started as an Austrian threat to use force.
- It escalated from there.

# Escalation

Not all disputes escalate to war.

- 155 of 2,300 MIDs between 1816-2001 escalated to war.

Consider the Trent Affair.

- It started as an American (i.e. Union) seizure of HMS Trent.
- It ended with an apology from Lincoln.
- Britain eagerly accepted.

Motivating question: what disputes escalate to war and why?

# War Dynamics

Examples of academic research in this phase include:

- Duration of war.
  - e.g. First Schleswig-Holstein War lasted three years.
  - Second Schleswig-Holstein War lasted six months.
- Who wins the war.
  - In the previous case: Denmark won the first.
  - Prussia easily won the second.
- Overall fatalities in the war
  - Important: war is a battle-death threshold.
- Whether the war become multilateral

Overall concern: the properties of the war and behavior of states in it.

# Post-War

Interesting research agenda: states that have already fought a war tend to do it again.

- Example: Russia and Turkey have fought 12 wars since the 16th century.
- Wars also recur within the rivalry context (e.g. India-Pakistan).

Other questions:

- Which type of peace agreements lead to lasting peace?
- How long until agreements are abrogated?

This phase begins with the end of the war and ends with onset of next conflict.

# Why Study MIDs?

Beyond other data concerns, MIDs are useful in understanding our overall question of the causes of war.

- What causes war is the motivating question of our discipline.
- However, we can't look at just wars to see what causes it.
  - This is the cardinal sin of "selecting on the dependent variable."
- Thus, we need to know what MIDs, once initiated, escalate toward war and what MIDs do not.

Data limitations led to an earlier concern for "crises" ( e.g. Agadir Crisis, July Crisis).

- CoW-MID is universal (since 1816) and includes MIDs at much lower levels of hostility and "seriousness."

# What Is a MID?

A MID is a united historical case in which one state system member threatened, display, or outright used military force against the government, or official representatives, property, or territory of the government (p. 168).

- *Militarized*: stakes must be sufficiently important to warrant threat, display, or use of force.
- *Interstate*: restricts focus off strictly domestic conflagrations.
- *Dispute*: disagreement over how to resolve one or more issues.

# Incident Coding Rules

There are seven criteria for evaluating if a particular action is a militarized incident.

1. Must be between state system members.
2. Must not be authorized by treaty or invitation of a “target” state.
3. Must be explicit, non-routine, and government-authorized.
  - “Vague” actions are included only if Side B responds.
4. Must be done by official forces of the government.
  - Local forces tend to count in the developing world.
5. Will not be treated as separate if two states are at war.
6. Actions against private property do not count.
  - Exceptions: (At least 24-hour) seizures, attacks on international shipping, pursuit of rebels across borders.
  - *However*, Side B must respond militarily or diplomatically!
7. Territorial claims must be in a well-defined geographic area.

# Categorizing Militarized Incidents

Militarized Incidents have three categories.

1. Threats of force
2. Displays of force
3. Use of force



# Threats of Force

Threats are verbal indications of hostile intent, often cloaked in ultimatums. Examples:

- Threats to use force
- Threat to blockade
- Threat to occupy territory
- Threat to declare war
- Threat to use nuclear weapons

# Displays of Force

Displays of force are military demonstrations without actual combat. Examples:

- Alert
- Mobilization
- Show of force (includes airspace/maritime violations)
- Border fortification
- Nuclear alert
- Border violation (by land only)

# Use of Force

Use of force, the highest category, involve active military operations. Examples:

- Blockade
- Occupation of territory
- Seizure
- Attack, Clash
- Raid
- Declaration of war
- Use of CBRN weapons

# Aggregating Incidents to Disputes

In order to ensure incidents are aggregated to “united, historical cases” (i.e. disputes), CoW-MID employs the following aggregation procedures.

1. All incidents must involve same or overlapping set of state system members.
  - Not a problem in a dyadic dispute.
  - In multilateral disputes, actions must be coordinated among or against multiple state system members.
2. Each issue and geographic dispute area must be discrete, unless historical evidence suggests two seemingly separate issues are in fact connected.

# Aggregating Incidents to Disputes

3. There are specific rules for start dates and end dates.
  - Start date is the date of the first militarized incident.
  - **End date without any type of resolution:** last militarized incident, if no other incident occurs for six months afterward.
  - **End date with formal resolution:** date of formal resolution, if no other incident occurs for one month afterward.
  - **End date with cease-fire:** date of cease-fire, if no other incident occurs for three months afterward.

This rule also introduces “six-month counts” into the data.

- Observed for “continuous actions” like seizures, blockades, occupations of territory or show of force.
- Start date is the first militarized incident.
- End date is six months after the continuous action if there is no other militarized incident.

# Aggregating Incidents to Disputes

4. Disputes that escalate to war end other ongoing disputes between state system members.
  - Every militarized incident is then coded as part of the war.
5. In cases of MIDs within context of civil war, whichever side controls the capital is “the government.”
  - Turnover in government during a civil war may mark the end of a MID.
6. Disputes and wars of independence are included only if there are at least one state system member on each sides.
7. MID “joiners” have different start dates and possibly different end dates.

# Other Attributes of CoW-MID Data Set

The data set also codes for other attributes of a MID.

- Revisionist character
  - Which side is dissatisfied with the status quo and wants to change it?
- Dispute outcome
  - Victory (Side A/B), Yield (Side A/B), Stalemate, Compromise, Released
- Method of settlement
  - Negotiated, Imposed, None
- Issue
  - Territory, Policy, Regime

# Conclusion

Some things to consider going forward:

- Selection effects: non-random incidence of conflict initiation?
- Rational choice models: is conflict initiation exogenous?
- Issues (and even regime type): is the war-proneness or pacifying effect observed at all phases of conflict?



# Conclusion

*Be clear with your terms.*

- “Conflict” is a process with four phases.
- A “MID” is a disagreement over an issue between two states that includes a threat, display, or use of force.

This is the language we'll be using in this class.

- It also gives us a measurement of the overall concepts we want.

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