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# Interventions/Uses of Force Short of War

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## Introduction

The causes and consequences of war among nation-states have been studied extensively by scholars of international politics. The volumes devoted to particular conflicts would easily fill the stacks at major research universities. The main library at the University of Tennessee, for instance, holds 7000 or so separate titles for the American Civil War, over 3000 for World War I, and some 10,000 for World War II. Despite such scholarly attention, however, Vasquez (1993:3) concluded that a generalizable and "coherent explanation of war" remained elusive. Since then, theorizing and empirical investigation of the causes of war has become more sophisticated. Yet one still wonders whether we know more about violent conflict today than then, or even 50 years ago.

Early behavioralists anticipated the rapid accumulation of knowledge as traditional methods of inquiry gave way to a more scientific process. J. David Singer and Melvin Small expressed the hopes of these post-World War II social scientists when they wrote, "Without belittling the efforts of earlier generations it is only within the past several decades that any intellectual assault of promise has been launched against this organized tribal slaughter. That is, until war has been systematically described, it cannot be adequately understood, and with such understanding comes the first meaningful possibility of controlling it, eliminating it, or finding less reprehensible substitutes for it" (Small and Singer 1982:14; also see Guetzkow 1950). Implied in the behavioral revolution was a belief that the empirical evidence necessary to test theories of international politics was capable of convincingly rejecting or confirming logically derived conjectures. Indeed, one can conclude from Singer and Small's advance of the scientific process that description alone would lead to understanding (Bremer et al. 2003). However, data collection efforts at uncovering the causes of war have not yet provided the clear answers that scholars had hoped for. In fact, evidence is frequently mixed and sometimes even contradictory. As such, widely accepted generalizations about state behaviors that correlate with war have not emerged, with the possible exception of the democratic peace (Gleditsch 1995).

Perhaps the difficulties in explaining violent interstate conflict are understandable given that war remains an exceedingly complex and dynamic social process. Albert Einstein was once asked why the human race could uncover the building blocks of life but fail to understand the forces that push leaders toward war. He replied, "that is simple, my friend. It is because politics is more difficult than physics." While most social scientists share Einstein's opinion, integrative cumulation (Zinnes 1976) suffers from more than just complicated causal processes. Important ontological and epistemological differences continue to divide the discipline and frustrate progress.

This is not to say that the study of interstate conflict and foreign policy decision making has not advanced in the last few decades (see Leng 1999). Indeed, important theoretical and methodological contributions have been made. War frequently was characterized as a singular event and not as a process or the outcome of a series of

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foreign policy choices. However, increasingly conflict is modeled as a series of steps or a "sequence of events and choices" (Bremer 1993) that follows the emergence of contentious issues (Most and Starr 1989; Diehl 1992). This means that rather than correlate war onset with certain structural conditions of the international system, a process model delineates the evolution of contentious issues to the outbreak of militarized violence (a critical threshold), and next identifies the escalatory foreign policy decisions that expand the conflict (Hensel 2002; also see Bremer et al. 2003). Such a model invites richer theoretical insight into the causes of interstate conflict and demands greater methodological sophistication.

A process model further advances data collection efforts by focusing attention on each of the multiple stages of the conflict process. The Correlates of War (COW) project, while critical in the development of a scientific study of international politics, inadvertently narrowed the field of investigation to war onset. It is only recently that new datasets have become available with sufficiently long time series to systematically study elite foreign policy decisions short of war. Perhaps it is here, with the initial steps of the conflict process, that we may better uncover regularized patterns that produce dangerous dyads and dangerous decision processes in world politics.

This essay reviews recent research on the initial militarization of contentious issues by state leaders. If war is best viewed as a process or the outcome of a series of foreign policy choices, then the early steps leaders take down a path toward major armed conflict must be critical to any explanation of war onset. The first section offers several rationales for studying low-level militarized clashes. Next, three prominent datasets on armed conflict short of war are introduced and described. These datasets document the initial steps in the conflict process and thus are resourced to provide important evidence on leader decisions to militarize contentious issues. Then, current research using these data to test underlying and proximate causes of militarized interstate violence is reviewed. The intent here is to explore conditions found to increase the probability of dispute militarization and intervention. Finally, the essay concludes with an assessment of what the future holds for the study of low-level armed conflict both theoretically and methodologically.

## Conceptualizing Low-Level Militarized Conflict

War is an exceedingly rare event. Most countries in the international system have never experienced an interstate war. In fact, from 1816 to 2001 the Militarized Interstate Dispute (MID) dataset reports only 106 instances of interstate war, which averages to a war every 1.75 years. At the dyadic level, however, war onset is even rarer. Less than two tenths of one percent of all dyad-years witness war onsets. In 1893, for example, there is only one war initiation (Franco-Thai) out of 702 possible dyads or a probability of war onset less than half a percent. A hundred years later, in 1981, only one dyad set off a new war (Iran-Iraq) out of 12,560 possible dyads or less than one tenth of one percent. Even if one selects cases on the basis of political relevance (contiguous, less than 12 nautical miles over water, and/or a major power in the dyad), the probability of war onset in any given dyad-year is less than 1 percent. Obviously, such a rare event makes it difficult to discern patterns, especially given that there are many explanations for war occurrence (Russett and Oneal 2001:94).

Examining lower-level violent conflict offers three immediate benefits. First, it increases the number of observations for empirical analysis (see Bremer 1993; also see Gleditsch et al. 2002). Indeed, according to Russett and Oneal (2001:94), "militarized disputes short of war are about thirty times more common than wars." The larger *N* allows for the possibility of much greater variation on important right-hand side variables and thus a better assessment of their relationship to armed conflict.

Bremer (1993:14) insists that a "strategy of coping with the 'small  $n$ ' problem is to broaden the class of events under scrutiny and thereby increase the number of instances available for study." He goes on to write that this was one of the primary "motivations for undertaking the collection of militarized interstate dispute data" (Bremer 1993:14).

The second reason for studying lower-level conflict is that wars typically begin as nonviolent disagreements over contentious issues. Only after a series of steps is taken and thresholds are breached do states find themselves in such costly conflicts. The militarization of the dispute offers one such threshold that signals the possibility of escalation. Indeed, if war is the result of contagion (i.e. intervention) and escalation, then an understanding of such violent conflagrations comes from an understanding of how lower-level conflict spreads geographically and how certain foreign policy choices lead to the reciprocation of military violence rather than its diminution.

Third, examining low-level militarized conflict helps avoid, or at least helps to minimize, selection effects. Any attempt to explain war onset cannot do so adequately by choosing cases according to values of the dependent variable. Wars represent a nonrandom subset of militarized clashes and therefore any attempt to model statistically the relationship between theoretically critical right-hand side variables and war onset will generate biased coefficient estimates. Data on low-level interstate disputes and intervention decisions aid researchers in controlling for selection effects by addressing the onset of armed conflict along with escalation to war in one unified model.

Finally, the decision to militarize a contentious issue or intervene militarily in a crisis remains a critical one. Despite Schelling's (1966) contention that military violence supplements diplomatic bargaining and thus occurs alongside bilateral negotiations, the use of military force tends to transform any bargaining environment. The dispatch of troops regardless of the situation introduces the possibility of casualties, which imposes new burdens on political leaders. Nationalistic calls for reprisal as well as very real concerns that attacks from a rival may be imminent frequently persuade leaders to further militarize a tense situation. Tit-for-tat exchanges of increasing violence push states toward war (Leng 1983; Vasquez 1993; Hensel 1999; Crescenzi et al. 2007). Even military interventions designed to secure peace among warring parties frequently fail to stop the killing and sometimes even trap states in a cycle of deepening hostility (Bueno de Mesquita 1981; Diehl et al. 1996; Krain 2005). Thus, low-level militarization of a contentious issue or crisis remains a critical step toward conflict expansion and war onset (see Jervis 1984; Holsti 1989; Leng 2004).

Increasingly, scholars recognize the importance of datasets that record instances of low-level militarized conflict. In fact, these datasets have become the primary sources of observations used to empirically test theoretical models of foreign policy decision making that leads to the use of military force. Such data offer the opportunity to define the dangerous dyads in world politics, closely monitor escalatory foreign policy decisions, and craft global policy responses to resolve underlying contentious issues.

#### **Low-Level Conflict Dataset Comparisons: MID, ICB, and UCDP/PRIO**

If the decision to militarize a contentious issue is a critical step toward war onset, then one needs to map such decisions to understand better the data-generating process. While numerous attempts have been made to record information on low-level militarized conflict, four datasets are used extensively by scholars of world politics to test theoretical conjectures regarding uses of force. The MID dataset remains perhaps the best known, but the International Crisis Behavior (ICB) project, the Armed Conflict Dataset of the Uppsala Conflict Data Program and the Peace Research Institute, Oslo (UCDP/PRIO), and the Pearson and Baumann (1994) International

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Military Intervention (IMI) data project also represent widely used electronic files on armed conflict. The specific coding rules for each data project are unique, but each effort shares the same goal of recording information on the decision by governments to militarize contentious issues. Therefore, these datafiles represent the best information currently available on foreign policy decisions short of war (see Figure 1).

### *Militarized Interstate Dispute Dataset*

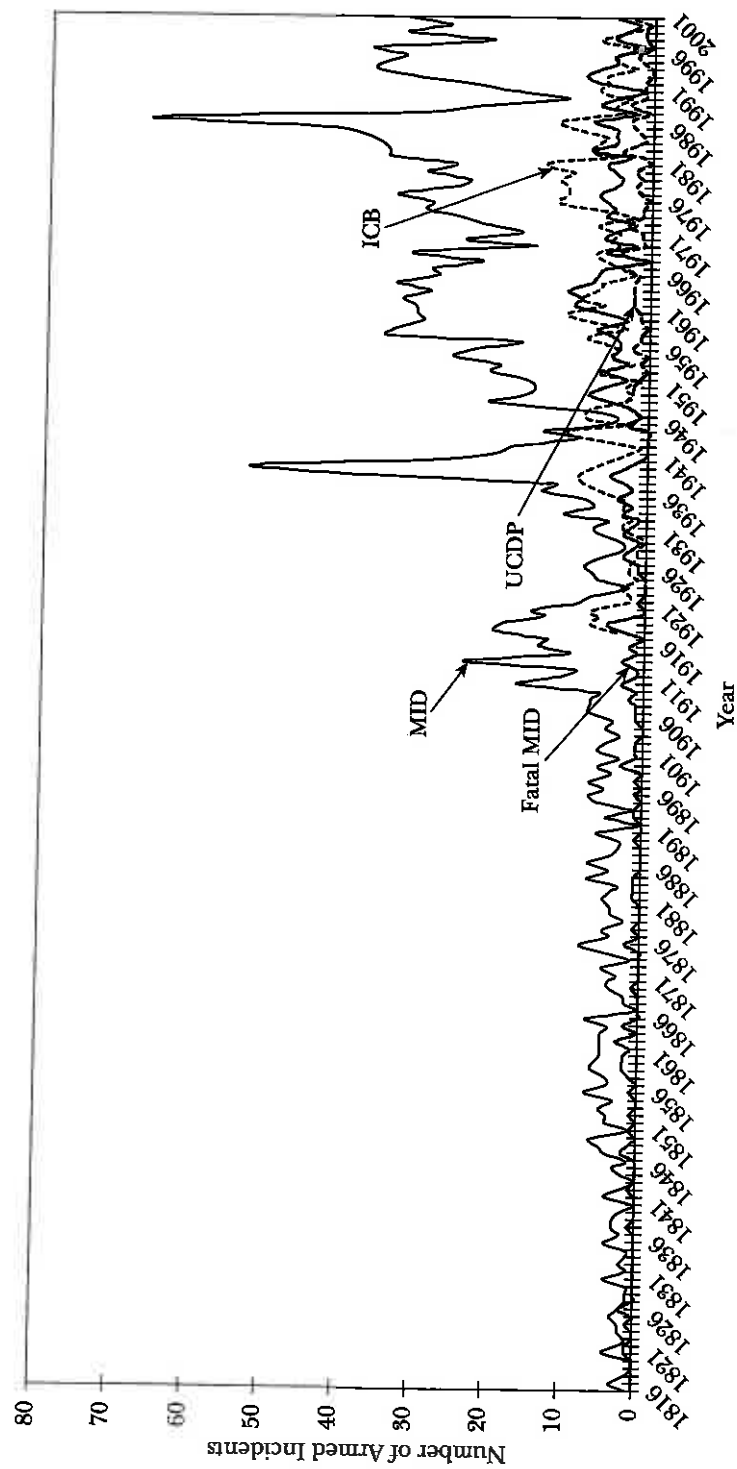
The MID dataset was first made publicly available in 1984. The original essay describing the data was published by Charles Gochman and Zeev Maoz (1984) in the *Journal of Conflict Resolution*. The intent of the MID project has always been to "understand how state interactions lead to interstate war" (Jones et al. 1996:168). Militarization was defined as the foreign policy step that took a contestation or disagreement over salient issues to a "serious" stage. According to Gochman and Maoz (1984:587), MIDs are defined as "a set of interactions between or among states involving threats to use military force, displays of military force, or actual uses of military force" and "to be included, these acts must be explicit, overt, nonaccidental, and government sanctioned."

A total of 960 disputes was recorded over the 1816 to 1976 time frame, although considerable over-time variation was uncovered. As one would expect given the rise in the number of recognized nation-states, most (over 75 percent) of the disputes occur in the twentieth century, most in the post-World War II era, and increasingly among the underdeveloped countries of Asia, Africa, and the Middle East (Hensel 2002; also see Hensel and Diehl 1994 for an empirical assessment of shatterbelts). The initial study also documented that most low-level armed conflicts were bilateral affairs of short duration, few casualties, and little escalation or diffusion. However, these data did reveal a relatively small number of highly conflictual dyads: dyads with many militarized disputes and higher probabilities of escalation to war (Maoz 2004).

In subsequent versions of the MID dataset (2.1 and 3.0), similar conclusions regarding low-level violent conflict among nation-states in the international system are drawn, despite a substantial increase in the number of observations (Jones et al. 1996; Ghosn et al. 2004). The 2.1 version both backdated and updated militarized dispute observations. An additional 542 observations were added to the 1816–1976 time period, while 502 new disputes erupted from 1977 to 1992. The MID3 project then added 296 disputes from 1993 to 2001. Disputes continue to be bilateral affairs with few casualties and little escalation, although the use of military force appears to have dropped off over the last decade, as have territorial revision types. Since both are positively related to escalation, war onset also has diminished (Ghosn et al. 2004:141). Once again it appears that certain states account for a large amount of the violent conflict in the international system. Nearly 10 percent of the states in the international system have never been involved in even a single militarized dispute and 40 percent have fewer than five. At the other end of the spectrum, less than 7 percent of the states in the international system are responsible for the vast majority of armed conflict that is observed. Fourteen states have each been involved in over a hundred militarized disputes, with the US, Russia, Great Britain, and China being the most conflict-prone states in the system. It does appear that certain states are "fightaholics," as Maoz (2004) argues.

### *International Crisis Behavior Project*

The study of crisis decision making emerged in the 1960s with the pioneering work of Charles McClelland, Charles Hermann, and the Stanford Group, consisting of Ole



**Figure 1** A comparison of MID, Fatal MID, ICB, and UCDP incidents over time

Holsti, Robert North, Dina Zinnes, and Richard Brody (for example, see McClelland 1961; 1964; Holsti et al. 1964; Holsti 1965; Zinnes 1966). With Cold War tensions on the rise, and near outbreaks of violent conflict at Berlin and Cuba, as well as the critical situations involving the Suez Canal in 1956 and the islands of Quemoy and Matsu in 1958, scholars sought to define more systematically the conditions surrounding these crisis events. Research focused not only on the decision making of individual leaders, but more specifically (and perhaps more importantly) on leader perceptions and the deterrent strategies crafted to manage the crises (Brecher 1977; Brecher and Wilkenfeld 1982). While much of this early work concentrated on a small number of foreign policy events, quantitative data collection efforts began to emerge with the intent of generalizing across historical eras about crisis conditions.

Michael Brecher led the way with the establishment of the ICB project in 1975. In a similar way to the MID effort, Brecher clearly envisioned the systematic study of crises as being part of a more general effort to understand escalation to war (Brecher and Wilkenfeld 1982). However, while the MID project emphasizes international structure over agency, attention to leader decisions, motivations, and perceptions remains a cornerstone of ICB. Indeed, Brecher and Wilkenfeld (1982:383) defined an international crisis as a "situation deriving from change in a state's internal or external environment which gives rise to decision makers' perceptions of *threat to basic values, finite time for response, and the likelihood of involvement in military hostilities*" (italics in original). This explicit focus on policy choice "in conditions of complexity and uncertainty" clearly distinguishes the ICB project from the MID endeavor (Brecher and Wilkenfeld 1997:3). The individual crisis actor component dataset of ICB includes information on regime type, issue salience, and group decision making, all of which enable a fuller assessment of governments and their actions under stressful conditions. Furthermore, the ICB project specifies trigger events as well as the principal foreign policy responses by actors to crisis conditions. Ultimately, the ICB datasets offer some of the most useful information for modeling prewar decision making of states and leaders.

Brecher and Wilkenfeld have continued to revise and update the ICB project. An early version of the dataset recorded 90 interstate crises involving 349 separate foreign policy actor cases (Brecher and Wilkenfeld 1982:385). As with MIDs, certain states account for a substantial number of the crisis events recorded. Indeed, only 89 distinct countries made up the original 349 actor cases, which suggests that particular states were repeat offenders. The most recent version of the datafile (ICB4) extends from 1918 to 2001 and includes a total of 434 international crises and 956 foreign policy events. Similar to the initial version of the datafile, ICB4 reveals a few highly conflict-prone states. Four countries, in particular, have been involved in 30 or more crisis events, with the United States at the top of the list with 62 separate foreign policy crises. More strikingly, only 10 percent of the states in the international system from 1918 to 2001 are responsible for over 50 percent of the foreign policy crisis events.

Similar to the MID project, most crises involve few primary actors. In fact, over 80 percent of international crises have fewer than three primary actors and most last less than 60 days. However, the events recorded by the ICB project appear to be of greater salience than most of those making it into the MID dataset (Hewitt 2005). More crises as a percentage of the total involve the issue of territory and nearly 70 percent result in at least minor clashes between military forces. Further, nearly 50 percent of international crises erupt in a protracted conflict setting, once again highlighting the important influence certain states have on global conflict patterns. Compare this to militarized interstate disputes, where nearly 30 percent involve mere threats or displays of force, but no actual fighting. Even for those disputes coded as uses of force, approximately 20 percent are seizures or the occupation of an adversary's territory and thus do not actually result in much if any combat. Admittedly, a majority of MIDs

experience no reciprocation (in fact, 99 percent of nonreciprocated disputes have no battle casualties whatsoever). When disputes are reciprocated, they are 19 times more likely to result in battle casualties and they tend to endure on average 172 days longer. It certainly seems that a leader's decision to respond militarily to a crisis or dispute trigger represents a critical threshold choice that takes a country down the path toward war.

*Armed Conflict Dataset of the Uppsala Conflict Data  
Program/Peace Research Institute, Oslo*

Lewis Fry Richardson (1960a; 1960b), a meteorologist turned social scientist, sought to model mathematically incidents of violent conflict. While interstate warfare was the primary focus of Richardson's social science research, his data collection effort for *Statistics of Deadly Quarrels* involved multiple kinds of armed struggles. The 779 cases of dyadic fatal quarrels include riots, civil conflict, and full-scale interstate wars. Few today would accept that the sources of violent conflict at an interpersonal level are the same forces driving nation-states into deadly quarrels, but the Armed Conflict Dataset produced jointly by the University of Uppsala and the Peace Research Institute of Oslo does not limit cases only to those between recognized nation-states in the global system. Indeed, the UCDP/PRIO Armed Conflict Dataset includes incidents of internal, extra-systemic, and internationalized armed conflict to supplement the strictly interstate events recorded. Consequently, the UCDP/PRIO Armed Conflict Dataset offers a broader set of low-level conflict incidents that can be used to examine a variety of decision-making processes. The UCDP/PRIO Armed Conflict Dataset does restrict cases based on battle fatalities and this coding criterion generates fewer observations than the MID or ICB projects, even in the shortened post-World War II time period that this dataset covers. But, the battle fatality rule does avoid criticism leveled at the MID project that too many disputes are inconsequential and likely not government-sanctioned. At the level of 25 battle deaths, the incidents included in the UCDP/PRIO Armed Conflict Dataset clearly represent salient events with careful leader involvement.

UCDP defines an armed conflict as "a contested incompatibility that concerns government or territory or both where the use of armed force between two parties results in at least 25 battle-related deaths. Of these two parties, at least one is the government of a state" (Gleditsch et al. 2002:618-19). These coding criteria generate 225 conflicts from 1946 to 2001, although only 42 are strictly interstate disputes. The remaining conflicts are contested issues internal to countries or are disputes between recognized states in the international system and colonial entities. The interstate armed conflicts remain mostly bilateral affairs (nearly 90 percent), but unlike the ICB and MID datasets, a substantial number of the UCDP/PRIO Armed Conflict Dataset conflicts escalate to full-scale war. In fact, over 40 percent experience 1000 or more battle related fatalities. This percentage is considerably higher than either the ICB or MID dataset and suggests that the UCDP/PRIO Armed Conflict Dataset conflicts tend to be serious incompatibilities. Further, the frequency of escalation suggests that it may be difficult to prevent such salient issues from spiraling out of control once casualties have been incurred.

Similar to the other two data projects, the UCDP/PRIO Armed Conflict Dataset also shows that certain countries account for many of the armed conflicts. However, in the post-World War II era China, rather than the US, the UK, or Russia, represents the most conflict-prone country in the international system, having fought wars with Taiwan, India, and Vietnam, and lesser armed conflicts with Russia and Myanmar. The Indian-Pakistani rivalry also stands out in the post-World War II era, as does the Ethiopian-Eritrean conflict, and Israel's relations with its neighbors. Territory also defines the issue incompatibility of the vast majority of the UCDP/PRIO Armed



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Conflict Dataset armed conflicts. In fact, of the interstate conflicts listed by the UCDP/PRIO project, only three strictly involve nonterritorial issues: Russia-Hungary (1956), US-Grenada (1983), and US-Panama (1989). It may be that the UCDP/PRIO Armed Conflict Dataset tends to record especially salient interstate incompatibilities not so much because of the battle fatality criterion, but because the contested issue is territory and leaders view territory as worth fighting over. Like the MID and ICB efforts, the UCDP/PRIO project provides a set of interstate incidents short of war that enables researchers to probe the militarization of contentious issues.

#### *Other Datasets*

While the three data projects described above record incidents of military intervention/uses of force short of war widely explored by scholars of foreign policy decision making and conflict processes, other data collection efforts exist that also contribute meaningfully to studies of elite decision making resulting in armed conflict. The Pearson and Baumann (1993) IMI data project concentrates on decisions by leaders to dispatch armed forces abroad; or, as Pickering and Kisangani (2005:29) write, "episodes when national military personnel are purposefully dispatched into other sovereign states." The difference is important since military personnel can be sent overseas for a number of different reasons, some of which do not involve the use of force. IMI coding rules seemingly limit case inclusion to incidents where troops actually cross country borders (thus the US is not defined as an actor in the Cuban missile crisis); however, it does establish a broad interpretation of what constitutes such a military action. Firing across the green line in Kashmir, penetrations of airspace, naval incursions, and US cruise missile attacks are in fact recorded by IMI and obviously represent clear uses of low-level force (Pickering and Peceny 2006). IMI further codes hostile as well as supportive military interventions. US military involvements in Panama, Afghanistan, and Iraq are included alongside tsunami relief provided by India to Sri Lanka and the evacuation of French nationals from Guinea-Bissau. As such, the IMI database offers a large number of observations from 1946 to 2005 effective for evaluating influences on foreign policy decision making. Not only does IMI arguably establish case-selection criteria relevant for examining diversionary actions, it also includes government steps taken against nonstate entities such as al Qaeda, UNITA, and Hezbollah (see Pickering and Kisangani 2005).

A widely explored datafile produced by Tillema (1994:251) records instances of "military operations undertaken openly by a state's regular military forces within a specific foreign land in such a manner as to risk immediate combat." Unlike IMI, supportive or humanitarian interventions are not included. Indeed, Tillema (1994) appears to view intervention as a form of hostile military force that dramatically increases the probability of full-scale war and thus connects more closely to the MID, ICB, and UCDP/PRIO projects. From 1945 to 1991, Tillema (1991; 1996) finds 335 incidents of overt military intervention (also see Tures 2001).

A number of armed conflict datasets also exist that are specific to the US case. The Blechman and Kaplan (1978) data, for example, were designed principally to investigate coercive bargaining (also see Zelikow 1987; Fordham 1998). As such, the events recorded reflect a concern with how military forces are physically moved in an attempt to influence the policy behavior of foreign leaders. Similar to IMI, Blechman and Kaplan include supportive military interventions such as the dispatch of marines to Lebanon by the Reagan administration in 1982, but ignore unreciprocated attacks against US military forces (Fordham and Sarver 2001). Alternatively, Meernik (1994:123) goes beyond actual uses of military force to code events in the international system "that are likely to precipitate active consideration of the use of force." Rejecting the assumption that the baseline probability of force remains constant across administrations and over years, Meernik investigates events erupting in the international system

deemed sufficiently salient for presidents to launch a military action. The focus on opportunities reflects a broader interest in the perception of threat by political elites and thus connects Meernik's efforts to the ICB project.

### Explaining Armed Force Short of War

Recent scholarship on foreign policy decision making resulting in violent interstate conflict goes in two very different and possibly incompatible directions. First, theoretical and empirical attention to enduring rivalry suggests that lasting perceptions of threat between states establish an environment of mistrust and fear, which inhibits the resolution of contentious issues (Leng 1983; Vasquez 1993; Diehl and Goertz 2000; Colaresi and Thompson 2002; Rasler and Thompson 2006). Fears of exploitation often lead elites to use military force to demonstrate resolve and thus deter the aggressive ambitions of a rival state. In this context of strategic competition, hawkish leaders frequently rise to power by exploiting fears of conflict escalation. The increasingly coercive policies designed to check a rival only exacerbate security concerns and deepen national perceptions of enmity. The result appears to be increasing hazards of recurrent low-level armed conflict and escalation to war.

A second research program defines the use of force as part of a larger bargaining process over the allocation of scarce resources (Schelling 1960; 1966; Blainey 1973; Pillar 1983; Bueno de Mesquita and Lalman 1992; Morgan 1994; Fearon 1995; Reiter 1996; Goemans 2000; Wagner 2000; Filson and Werner 2002; Powell 2003). Such a bargaining model of violent interstate conflict treats low-level uses of force as rational attempts to obtain information about opponents. Since leaders have incentives to bluff about military capabilities and resolve, only costly foreign policy actions effectively reveal accurate information about opponents (Fearon 1994; Schultz 2001). Consequently, foreign policy elites sometimes opt for politically costly military actions to either convey resolve to an opponent or elicit a response from an opponent so as to alleviate uncertainty and confusion. Escalation to war occurs when costly military actions fail to "facilitate the convergence of expectations" (Reiter 2003:32; also see Stoessinger 1974; Blainey 1988).

Rivalry and bargaining theory both locate the causes of armed conflict in the perceptions and beliefs of foreign policy elites. While a consensus has emerged on a set of structural factors that increase the likelihood of dispute militarization, more proximate causal elements of force remain more theoretically contentious and empirically unverified. Yet, extant research increasingly explores the political environment surrounding elite decision making as well as the actual bargaining strategies used by leaders to achieve foreign policy aims. Scholarship also increasingly models the interactive influence geostrategic and political environments have on leaders, not only in their decision making, but also in how they define a contentious issue (Bremer 1993; James 2004). It seems that scholars increasingly acknowledge that structural factors or the underlying conditions that increase the likelihood of conflict onset are insufficient to explain why and when elites decide to militarize a contentious issue or intervene in a crisis (see for example Snyder et al. 1962). The remainder of this section will summarize extant evidence on the structural and micro-level causes of interventions/low-level uses of military force in world politics and the strength of the evidence collected to date.

### *Structural Causes of the Use of Force*

Background conditions and underlying contexts affect foreign policy decision making. As Vasquez (1993:7) writes, "Underlying causes are fundamental causes that set off a

train of events that end in war." Since such structural conditions change little over short periods of time, logically they cannot explain a decision to militarize a contentious issue. For such an account, more proximate factors or causes must be identified. Yet, underlying conditions remain critical to any explanation of foreign policy choice inasmuch as they shape perceptions about the intentions of others and establish a baseline probability of militarized aggression. While ultimately leaders authorize sending in marines, shelling an opponent's troops, or bombing military installations, background conditions, like a natural gas leak, make certain decisions (similar to the striking of a match) particularly precarious (see Goertz 1994).

Extant research supports the conclusion that two structural factors in particular influence the likelihood of dispute militarization. Contiguity and regime type strongly affect state propensities for armed conflict (see Table 1). Proximity provides both opportunity and risk, while at the same time, distance reduces one's ability to project military power (see Boulding 1962; Vasquez 1995). Monadically, the number of land borders increases the probability of force (Reiter 1999). Souva and Prins (2006), for example, find each additional country border increases the likelihood of fatal MID onset by about 11 percent (also see Starr and Most 1976; Bremer 1982). Dyadically, both direct contiguity and geographical distance raise the probability of force substantially as well (Diehl 1985; Bremer 1993; Oneal and Russett 1997; Mitchell and Prins 2004; Braithwaite 2005; Gartzke 2007). Senese (2005), in fact, finds contiguity to increase the probability of dispute onset by a factor of 17 and Russett and Oneal (2001) consistently find both noncontiguity and great circle distance to decrease MID onset propensities (also see Maoz and Russett 1993; Hewitt and Wilkenfeld 1999; DeRouen and Sprecher 2004; James 2004). The relationship may, however, be more nuanced than these studies suggest. Starr and Thomas (2005) note a nonlinear relationship between borders and low-level militarized conflict depending on both the ease of crossing boundaries and their salience (also see Vasquez 1993; Lemke 1995; 2002). Even military interventions appear to be influenced by geographic distance. Findley and Teo (2006) observe an increase in support by outside contiguous actors for both government and opposition parties involved in civil wars.

The strong evidence relating contiguity to intervention/force short of war connects to research on territoriality (Luard 1986; Diehl and Goertz 1988; Holsti 1991; Diehl 1992; Vasquez 1993; 1995; Kocs 1995; Huth 1996; Senese 1996; Mitchell and Prins 1999; Hensel 2001). Indeed, evidence indicates that territory remains a critical underlying cause of militarized aggression, the development of rivalry, and even escalation to war. Militarized disputes involving territorial stakes have a much higher likelihood of battle fatalities and they increase the probability of future disputes erupting (Senese 1996; Hensel 1999). Territorial disputes additionally appear to diffuse geographically at higher rates than other issues (Braithwaite 2006), thus expanding violent conflict and increasing the likelihood of full-scale war (see Vasquez 1993). Coupled with other structural factors, such as rivalry and/or contiguity, territoriality substantially increases the probability of low-level violent conflict and pushes leaders away from more accommodative bargaining strategies (Vasquez 1993; Rasler and Thompson 2006; Lekztian et al. 2008; see Huth and Allee 2002 for conflicting evidence).

The evidence linking democracy to peaceful foreign policies is abundant. Jack Levy (1989:270) goes so far as to say that the absence of war among democratic states is "as close as anything we have to an empirical law in international relations." Initial evidence was published by Babst (1972) and Small and Singer (1976), both of which observed a dyadic democratic peace using different datasets (the literature on democratic peace is large and growing, but see for example Rummel 1985; 1995; Doyle 1986; Bueno de Mesquita and Lalman 1992; Gleditsch 1992; Lake 1992; Bremer 1993; Maoz and Russett 1993; Russett 1993; Bueno de Mesquita and Siverson 1995; Ray 1995; Maoz 1996; Chan 1997; Owen 1997; Russett and Oneal 2001). Since these initial

**Table 1** Summary of evidence on the underlying causes of force short of war

<i>Explanatory factor</i>	<i>Expected relationship</i>	<i>Citations<sup>a</sup></i>	<i>Empirical evidence</i>
Military capabilities	Equal capabilities increase conflict propensities; asymmetry increases intervention	Maoz and Russett 1993 (crises); Barbieri 1996; Russett and Oneal 2001 (MIDs); Pickering and Kisangani 2005 (IMI)	Mixed
Contiguity	Land borders and contiguity increase conflict propensities and military intervention; distance decreases conflict propensities	Wallensteen 1981; Maoz and Russett 1993 (MIDs and crises); Senese 2005 (MIDs); DeRouen and Sprecher 2004 (crises); Findley and Teo 2006; Gelpi and Grieco 2008 (IMI/COW)	Strong
Alliance structure	Alliance pacts decrease conflict propensities	Ray 1990 (increase MIDs); Maoz and Russett 1993 (decrease crises); Barbieri 1996; Caprioli and Trumbore 2006 (null relationship with MIDs); Russett and Oneal 2001 (decrease MIDs)	Mixed
Territoriality	Territorial issues at stake increase conflict propensities	Diehl and Goertz 1988; Vasquez 1993; Huth 1996; Senese 1996 (fatal MIDs); Hensel 1999 (MIDs); Prins and Sprecher 1999 (MIDs)	Strong
Economic interdependence	Trade reduces conflict propensities; financial openness reduces conflict propensities	Barbieri 1996; 2002 (increases MIDs); Hegre 2000; Gartzke 2007 (fatal MIDs); Russett and Oneal 2001; Souva and Prins 2006; Gelpi and Grieco 2008 (MIDs); Goenner 2004 (null with MIDs)	Moderately strong; perhaps limited to developed and/or democratic states. Also need to consider better selection effects
IGO membership	More memberships reduces conflict propensities	Oneal and Russett 1999a; 1999b; Boehmer et al. 2004 (MIDs)	Moderately strong, but possibly contingent on type of IGO
Regime type	Democracy reduces conflict propensities	Bueno de Mesquita and Lalman 1992 (MIDs); Maoz and Russett 1993 (MIDs and crises); Ray 1995; Gowa 1999; Russett and Oneal 2001; DeRouen and Sprecher 2004 (crises); Gleditsch and Hegre 1997 (UCDP); Tures 2001 (Tillema)	Strong dyadically; monadic evidence may be growing; some evidence limiting effect to developed states
Economic development	Development reduces conflict propensities	Maoz and Russett 1993 (MIDs and crises); Hegre 2000 (fatal MIDs); Gartzke 2007 (MIDs)	Moderately strong, but possibly contingent on geographic distance

<sup>a</sup> MIDs, militarized interstate disputes; IMI, international military intervention; COW, Correlates of War

publications, research on democratic foreign policy decision making has exploded. While critics remain and theoretical explanations abound, evidence continues to mount that democracies rarely resort to force, even low-level uses of force (see for example Gleditsch and Hegre 1997; DeRouen and Sprecher 2004; Maoz 2004). Russett and Oneal (2001:108) find a one standard deviation increase in the level of dyadic democracy to reduce the risk of MID involvement by 46 percent, while two fully democratic states (both 10s) reduce the risk by 54 percent. More importantly, a lower democracy score (weak link) of negative 10 increases MID propensity by 109 percent. Not only is the substantive effect large, but it is considerably stronger than a measure of relative military might, suggesting that state-level attributes condition foreign policy decision making (Goenner 2004; Kim and Rousseau 2005; Russett and Oneal 2001). Bayesian model averaging also shows democracy to consistently reduce low-level conflict propensities across various model specifications, while the effect of relative capabilities is much less robust (Goenner 2004).

Regime type also appears to influence intervention decisions. Kegley and Hermann (1996), for example, find fairly consistent evidence that democratic states rarely are the targets of military interventions; however, they frequently are the initiators. Tures (2001), using similar Tillema (1991) data, observes only 12 instances of dyadic democratic interventions from 1945 to 1991, considerably fewer than one would expect by chance alone. When democracies do intervene, Kegley and Hermann (1997) conclude that military force is used principally to support liberal forces in anocratic countries (also see Peceny 1999; Enterline and Greig 2008).

Other structural factors, including national power, economic development and interdependence, alliances, and intergovernmental organization (IGO) membership, also appear to influence leader decisions to militarize contentious issues. However, the effects remain less robust to methodological choices and measurement differences. National power and alliances, in particular, frequently correlate with low-level armed conflict, including military interventions abroad (Pickering and Kisangani 2005), but contradictory evidence remains common and different theoretical models expect wildly different relationships (Morgenthau 1948; Waltz 1979; Organski and Kugler 1980; Ray 1990; 2003; Bremer 1992; Vasquez 1993; Schweller 1994; Russett and Oneal 2001). Economic interdependence, typically operationalized as dyadic trade (imports plus exports divided by GDP), is considered by Russett and Oneal (2001) to be one pillar of the Kantian triad. Yet, a small number of studies contests the pacific effects of trade (see for example Oneal and Russett 1997; Barbieri 2002; Gartzke and Li 2003; Goenner 2004; Keshk et al. 2004) and there is some concern that the anticipation of conflict may dampen dyadic trade flows (Pollins 1989a; 1989b; Morrow 1999; Li and Sacko 2002). Despite such challenges, research appears to increasingly point to trade, and economic interdependence more broadly, reducing conflict propensities (Oneal and Russett 1999a; 1999b).

Evidence for IGO membership and economic development seems a bit more consistent, but there remain relatively few systematic analyses. While Oneal and Russett (1999b) conclude that shared memberships in IGOs reduces MID involvement, Gartzke et al. (2001:409) find a positive relationship between IGOs and low-level conflict, although they insist that measurement explains the unexpected result. A follow-up study shows IGO effectiveness contingent on the level of institutionalization, member cohesiveness, and organizational mandate (see Boehmer et al. 2004). Thus it appears that not all IGOs serve equally as forums for mitigating even low-level armed conflict (see the April 2008 special issue of the *Journal of Conflict Resolution*; also see Hensel 2006). Indeed, Pevehouse and Russett (2006) find IGOs composed predominantly of democratic states to strongly reduce the incidence of militarized conflict. Economic development appears to strongly correlate with force short of war, but again the dearth of systematic analyses limits any conclusions one can draw regarding robustness.

Rosecrance (1986) argues convincingly that developed states should be particularly peaceful since the costs of armed conflict as well as the benefits from trade are both higher for industrialized societies. Hegre (2000) agrees and finds strong evidence that development reduces fatal MID involvement (also see Mousseau 2000). Gartzke (2007) also observes development limiting low-level conflict, but interestingly only for contiguous dyads. Recent work by Boehmer and Sobek (2005) suggests that the highest conflict propensities can be found among states with intermediate levels of development.

*Leaders, Perceptions, and the Use of Force*

Empirical evidence relating structural conditions to low-level armed conflict links directly to leader perceptions of threat and a concern for signaling resolve. Models that rely uniformly on forces external to the operational context of elite decision making ignore critical micro-level factors that influence foreign policy choice. Even research that explicitly opens the black box of the state frequently disregards decision makers and their beliefs (Hermann and Kegley 1995; Kaarbo 2008). However, "if we are to develop models that are to account for whether and why disputes are prolonged or expand or escalate or terminate," Gochman (1993:68) writes, "these models are going to have to incorporate the 'rules' by which decision makers process information and choose among alternatives." Indeed, it may be that leader perceptions of structural conditions are more critical determinants of foreign policy choice than the actual structural conditions that exist (Keller 2005). As John Owen (1997:19) writes, "Ideas are inescapable filters through which actors read the world." Thus, leader beliefs about domestic political and international environments affect how they respond to foreign policy challenges (Sprout and Sprout 1965; Holsti 1970; Hermann and Kegley 1995; Hudson 2005).

Information levels, perceived insecurities, and leader beliefs regarding the role of military power in international politics all represent more proximate causal elements in a leader's choice to militarize contentious issues. Further, these factors directly address the political context surrounding foreign policy decision making and the interpretation of systemic conditions by national leaders (see Table 2). While a bargaining theory of war anticipates that complete and perfect information environments enable foreign policy elites to resolve contentious issues more efficiently (i.e. without armed conflict), a theory of rivalry expects low levels of trust among leaders, in part a function of previous bouts of violent conflict, to generate an environment of overt hostility and fear of exploitation. Bargaining theory thus suggests that shared information should bring leader expectations in line and reduce the probability of armed conflict (Fearon 1995; Powell 2003). The solution to militarized violence according to bargaining theory lies in factors related to the exchange of information and the updating of beliefs regarding an opponent's resolve, military might, and the costs of conflict. Structural factors, such as trade, media openness, shared membership in IGOs with dispute resolution procedures, and democratic political institutions, all should help reduce the incidence of armed conflict by reducing misperception among political elites and thus enabling more credible commitments (Cornwell and Colaresi 2002; Prins and Daxecker 2008). Further, the impact of information-providing institutions on leader perceptions should likely increase over time as elites acquire more information and commitments remain honored.

Rivalry, however, challenges this expectation. Both the punctuated equilibrium and evolutionary models of rivalry, while different in their expectations about the probability of renewed conflict, do not expect rival conflict propensities to decrease over the course of the rivalry. Empirical evidence appears to support rivalry expectations that conflict begets conflict. Goertz and Diehl (2000), for example, report that more

**Table 2** Summary of evidence on the proximate causes of low level uses of force

<i>Explanatory factor</i>	<i>Expected relationship</i>	<i>Citations<sup>a</sup></i>	<i>Empirical evidence</i>
Previous conflict	Increases probability of future conflict	Hensel 1994; 1999 (MIDs); Colaresi and Thompson 2002 (crises)	Moderately strong
Political environment	Domestic political opposition and leader tenure insecurity either increase or decrease the probability of armed conflict	Putnam 1988; Prins and Sprecher 1999; Lai and Slater 2006 (MIDs); Chiozza and Goemans 2003; James and Zhang 2005 (crises)	Mixed, but insufficient evidence
Leader type	Hawkish leaders increase probability of conflict	George 1969; Vasquez 1993; Prins 2001 (MIDs); Keller 2005 (crises)	Moderately strong, but insufficient evidence
Bargaining strategies	Coercive policies lead to tit-for-tat exchanges of increasing violence	Leng 1983; Hensel 1999 (MIDs); Prins 2005 (crises)	Moderately strong
Trigger	Increases probability of conflict escalation	Rioux 1997; DeRouen and Sprecher 2004; Keller 2005; Prins 2005 (crises); Bremer 2000 (MIDs)	Moderately strong, but perhaps influenced by leader type

<sup>a</sup> MIDs, militarized interstate disputes

than 50 percent of all armed conflict occurs in a rivalry context and "the most serious enduring rivalries are almost eight times more likely to experience war than pairs of states in isolated conflict" (Goertz and Diehl 2000:148). More relevant, Colaresi and Thompson (2002) find that the risk of a future crisis increases by over four times after the first crisis and by nearly nine times after the second crisis. These results indicate, as Leng (1983) documented over two decades ago, that rival states increasingly turn away from accommodative bargaining strategies as a rivalry lengthens and deepens, and war frequently is the end result.

If minimizing uncertainty fails to help rival states reach more efficient bargains, then perhaps leader perceptions cannot easily be changed by clearer signaling (see for example Diehl et al. 1996; for conflicting evidence see Cornwell and Colaresi 2002; Prins and Daxecker 2008). Indeed, even outside of rivalry, leader characteristics may influence how events and processes are defined. Hehir (2006) concludes that US and Serbian leaders during the Kosovo crisis selected courses of action that fit their own preconceived notions of international politics. These notions or analogies are important inasmuch as they provide a guide for how to act in a given crisis situation. Unfortunately, the historical lessons leaders rely upon "will be applied to a wide variety of situations," according to Jervis (1976:228), "without a careful effort to determine whether the cases are similar on crucial dimensions." Hehir (2006:79) concludes, "the analogy chosen will more often reflect biases, personal experiences and be an incomplete parallel with the contemporary event" (also see Smith and Stam 2004).

Further, certain conceptual models of international politics may be tied to the types of leaders that rise to power (Hermann 1980; Schafer and Walker 2006). For example, Keller (2005) has found that hawkish leaders are more likely than dovish leaders to militarize a crisis situation (also see Prins 2001). Constraint challengers, as Keller



labels them, are 13 times more likely than constraint respecters to use violence as the preeminent crisis management technique. Vasquez (1993) similarly concludes that leader type makes a difference in foreign policy decision making. Leaders, he insists, who tend to view the world through the lenses of nationalism and militarism are predisposed toward policies of confrontation and escalation. Evidence from studies on reciprocity appears to bolster Keller's (2005) and Vasquez's (1993) suppositions. While violent triggers to interstate crises in general increase the probability of conflict escalation (Ben-Yehuda 1999; DeRouen and Sprecher 2004; James 2004; Keller 2005), if one couples violent triggers with a hawkish leader in the targeted state, then the reciprocity of violence occurs in nine out of ten crises (Keller 2005).

The context of rivalry clearly heightens perceptions of insecurity, particularly among hawkish leaders. Indeed, the excessively high fear of exploitation in the context of rivalry frequently persuades leaders to respond powerfully to rival challenges with military force. Some evidence indicates that rival states increasingly respond to crisis triggers with violence and that this effect on policy choice influences even relations with nonrivals (Prins 2005). The foreign policy process, then, increasingly becomes militarized. Colaresi (2004) also demonstrates that rival leaders are rewarded electorally for hawkish behavior, thus further militarizing the foreign policy process. One can see, then, how such protracted conflicts endure. Hawkish policies keep elites in power, which only generates insecurities and fears of exploitation, which leads to challenges to perceived threats, which further generates fears and the continuation of hawkish policies. Such a cycle is clearly difficult to break. Even mediation attempts rarely appear to prevent violent conflict among rival states. Despite mediators going to such hotspots, Bercovitch et al. (1997:761) conclude, "no mediating effects on the severity of subsequent disputes, or even on the lessening of the likelihood of war follow a mediation."

The domestic political environment faced by leaders also influences the decision to use force. Leaders risk electoral punishment for foreign policy failures and thus any attempt to address contentious issues with military force must take into account the political context decisions will be made in (Mintz 2003; Kaarbo 2008). Empirical evidence, however, is mixed and even contradictory in the US case. Prins and Sprecher (1999), for example, observe political opposition pushing democratic leaders away from militarized reciprocity. Strong opposition parties increase the costs associated with risky foreign policy decisions by punishing leaders for failures that occur (see Reiter and Tillman [2002] for conflicting evidence). Along similar lines, Chiozza and Goemans (2003) conclude that the risk of being removed from office decreases the propensity to initiate crises, although Lai and Slater (2006) maintain that tenure insecurity for leaders in certain types of autocratic regimes actually increases the likelihood of low-level armed conflict. Ireland and Gartner (2001) find both coalition and majority governments to increase the hazard of MID initiation. In the US case, Howell and Pevehouse (2005) insist that party control offers a president political cover to engage in foreign adventurism and they find that higher levels of party power in Congress increase the likelihood of major uses of force. However, Marshall and Prins (2008) conclude that congressional opposition to a president's domestic policy priorities, rather than party control, pushes presidents to foreign policy and thus increases the chances of low-level armed conflict.

### **Conclusion: What Have We Learned and Where Do We Go from Here?**

An understanding of armed conflict short of war is essential if the international community hopes to prevent conflict escalation and contagion. Interstate war is increasingly viewed as the outcome of a complex decision-making process rather than of a



single policy choice that commits a nation from peace to war (Hensel 2002). Leaders take their countries down the path toward war when increasingly coercive foreign policy actions meet rival leaders who fear exploitation and see accommodative policy responses as signaling political and military weakness. This escalatory process begins with the initiation of military force and thus any attempt to turn the tide of war must focus first on the determinants and dynamics of the political choice to breach this critical threshold.

Data projects, such as MID, ICB, and UCDP/PRIO, provide the crucial empirical information on low-level conflict necessary to explore the conditions, both structural and micro-level, surrounding a decision to militarize a contentious issue. While the MID dataset remains the most utilized by conflict-oriented scholars, the cases recorded by the ICB project allow for a much closer examination of elite decision making in high-stress environments. UCDP/PRIO data have been available for the entire post-World War II era only since 2002 and thus these recorded events are only now becoming important for modeling efforts aimed at low-level militarized conflict.

Using these datasets, extant research shows contiguous states lacking democratic political institutions with unresolved territorial claims and previous bouts of armed conflict to be particularly dangerous. However, these structural conditions only create a climate of insecurity that can be exploited by political elites. They do not and cannot explain why certain political elites opt for force at specific points in a bargaining process. But couple this precarious structural climate with hawkish leaders who believe military force effectively demonstrates regime resolve and who are confronted with a militarized challenge by a rival, and conflict escalation seems nearly assured.

Unfortunately, in such rivalrous contexts, preventing or minimizing violent conflict remains particularly difficult since it involves entrenched perceptions about the intentions of others. Breaking down such perceptual barriers requires time and the development of trust. Since militarization of a contentious issue only reinforces enemy images and heightens insecurities, the international community must be proactive in overseeing efforts to resolve such salient disputes (see Greig 2001). While preventing the emergence of contentious issues in the first place will clearly help ameliorate conditions that give rise to armed conflict, such issues may be endemic to a system of interdependent yet sovereign states. As such, the international community may have better luck targeting force reciprocation since such a decision substantially increases the likelihood of conflict escalation to war. Security guarantees and sanctions for continued military aggression may sway some leaders to step back from the precipice and return troops to the barracks.

In the future, force short of war will continue to be studied extensively by conflict processes and foreign policy scholars. However, with the increased prevalence of civil unrest and war in the international system today, greater theoretical and empirical attention will likely turn to the internationalization of intrastate violence. According to one estimate, less than 10 percent of all armed conflict since 1989 is strictly interstate (Hensel 2002). Thus, modeling efforts will continue to probe escalatory processes in insurgencies and then how such violent conflict spreads to draw in outside states. UCDP/PRIO data are especially relevant since the project not only records low-level militarized violence within states, but additionally codes external participation into internal conflicts. Unfortunately, the UCDP/PRIO effort does not provide much insight into the decision processes of elites nor into the domestic political conditions that leaders confront during insurgencies. Perhaps a crisis behavior project will emerge for regimes facing such internal challenges.

Nonstate actors and salient issue emergence must also be part of any modeling efforts to explain militarized conflict. With the development of the Issue Correlates of War (ICOW) data, research can focus specifically on the origins of territorial, maritime, and river claims and how such claims are managed by policy makers over

time (see Hensel et al. 2008). While an effort to understand the role of nonstate actors may seem particularly appropriate in a post-9/11 world, even defining such actors remains difficult. Nongovernmental organizations constitute one type of nonstate actor with influence in certain policy areas; however, armed insurgent factions, ethno-political groups, and terrorist organizations all represent nonstate entities that need to be carefully identified before their actions can be explained.

Lastly, selection effects and interactive relationships remain key methodological concerns in the study of low-level armed conflict. The dynamic process by which leaders opt for force and then escalate a violent conflict requires sophisticated modeling strategies. Elite decisions remain strategic in nature and are rarely independent of one another. Further, leaders clearly rise to power and take certain courses of action conditional on specific structural conditions that exist. Modeling efforts, then, must continue to explore how structural conditions interact with the domestic political environment to influence the policy choices of leaders. Without some idea of how such leaders select themselves in and out of certain environments, models will undoubtedly remain underspecified.

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### Online Resources

Center for International Development and Conflict Management, ICB Data Collections. At [www.cidcm.umd.edu/icb/data](http://www.cidcm.umd.edu/icb/data), accessed Mar. 16, 2009. The ICB project records information about crisis situations among nation-states from 1918 to 2004, with the intent of studying both the escalation of crises to war and how leaders act in such stressful environments. The latest version includes data on 445 international crises, 979 crisis actors, and 32 protracted conflicts. Datasets available include dyadic-level crisis data, crisis-density rivalries, and one-sided crisis data.



Correlates of War, Militarized Interstate Dispute Dataset. At [www.correlatesofwar.org](http://www.correlatesofwar.org), accessed Mar. 16, 2009. Provides information on low-level armed conflict among nation-states from 1816 to 2001, offering scholars an opportunity to study how low-level violent conflict spreads both temporally and geography. The website also provides narratives for many of the disputes and an associated codebook describing the individual variables coded.

UCDP/PRIO Armed Conflict Dataset. At <http://www.prio.no/CSCW/Datasets/Armed-Conflict/UCDP-PRIO/>, accessed Mar. 16, 2009. Provides information on violent militarized conflict from 1946 to 2002. Defines armed conflict as "a contested incompatibility that concerns government and/or territory where the use of armed force between two parties, of which at least one is the government of a state, results in at least 25 battle-related deaths." Contains information on low-level conflict among nation-states, within nation-states, and between colonies and colonizers, and internationalized internal quarrels.

International Military Intervention Dataset. At [www.icpsr.umich.edu/cocoon/ICPSR/STUDY/21282.xml](http://www.icpsr.umich.edu/cocoon/ICPSR/STUDY/21282.xml), accessed Mar. 16, 2009. This data project collects information on all cases of military intervention across international boundaries by regular armed forces of independent states. The data extend from 1946 to 2005 and include information on initiator and target states, beginning and end dates, casualties, level of engagement, and domestic-level factors.

Peace Science Society (International). At <http://pss.la.psu.edu>, accessed Mar. 16, 2009. "A scientific association of individuals developing theory and methods for the study of peace." The Society is an international association of scholars devoted to the study of conflict management in world politics. The organization encourages use of the scientific method of inquiry to obtain useful and replicable information about conflict processes.

International Studies Association (ISA). At [www.isanet.org](http://www.isanet.org), accessed Mar. 16, 2009. ISA is the premier organization of scholars interested in the study of international affairs and world politics.

Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI). At [www.sipri.org](http://www.sipri.org), accessed Mar. 16, 2009. SIPRI promotes and conducts research on conflict and cooperation among states and peoples. The organization aims to contribute to global peace and security through the study of conflict and conflict management.

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