

**United States Uses of Force, 1870-1995  
Codebook**

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Our data on United States uses of force are contained in two files. The list of incidents with descriptions and bibliographic references is a portable document format (\*.pdf) file. The summary data set is an Excel file containing several observations about each incident. This codebook contains information on the way the incidents were selected and the variables in the summary data set. For a more thorough discussion of the data, see the following article, which users of this data set should cite:

Fordham, Benjamin O., and Christopher C. Sarver. 2001. "The Militarized Interstate Disputes Data Set and United States Uses of Force." *International Studies Quarterly* 45 (2): 455-66.

Please call any errors or omissions to our attention. We can be reached by e-mail at [fordham@albany.edu](mailto:fordham@albany.edu).

### **Definition**

Our definition of a use of force is based on that used by Blechman and Kaplan (1978, 12). They state that

[a] political use of the armed forces occurs when physical actions are taken by one or more components of the uniformed military services as part of a deliberate attempt by the national authorities to influence, or to be prepared to influence specific behavior of individuals in another nation without engaging in a continuing contest of violence.

Our understanding of a use of force includes those intended to initiate "a continuing contest of violence" but follows their definition in other respects. We recognize that major wars are qualitatively different from many of the minor incidents we included. Our data cover mainly small uses of force rather than these major wars, each of which might be understood as a collection of many separate uses of force. Because of the practical impossibility of decomposing wars into these separate incidents, we have chosen merely to treat each one as a single decision to use force. Obviously, users of these data should keep this in mind.

**List of Variables****UPDATED**

Most recent date on which this version of the data set was updated (mmddy).

**NUMBER**

Use of force number, corresponding to incidents in full incident list.

**MID1**

First dispute number, if any, of which the use of force was a part.

**MID2**

Second dispute number, if any, of which the use of force was a part.

**MID3**

Third dispute number, if any, of which the use of force was a part.

**MID4**

Fourth dispute number, if any, of which the use of force was a part.

**BKNUMBER**

Incident sequence number, if any, from Kaplan and Blechman (1978).

**ZNUMBER**

Incident number, if any, from Zelikow (1987).

**STYEAR**

Year in which use of force began.

**STMONTH**

Month in which use of force began.

**STDAY**

Day of month on which use of force began.

**ENDYEAR**

Year in which use of force ended.

Note: In many cases the dates on which an incident ended (i.e., ENDEAR, ENDMONTH, and ENDDAY) are missing. We included these only when we could verify that the military units involved in the use of force returned to the location and state of readiness in which they were prior to the start of the incident. In many cases it is not clear that this ever happened. In other cases, it was not discussed in the sources we used. These variables should be treated with caution.

**ENDMONTH**

Month in which use of force ended.

**ENDDAY**

Day on which use of force ended.

**TARGET1**

Target of use of force. Either Correlates of War state abbreviation or name of non-state actor.

**TARNUM1**

Correlates of War state number of target state, if any.

**COWMEM1**

Status of first target in Correlates of War interstate system.

1 = System member

0 = Not a system member

**GWMEM1**

Status of first target in interstate system given by Gleditsch and Ward (1999).

1 = System member

0 = Not a system member

**TARGET2**

Target of use of force. Either Correlates of War state abbreviation or name of non-state actor.

**TARNUM2**

Correlates of War state number of target state, if any.

**COWMEM2**

Status of first target in Correlates of War interstate system.

1 = System member

0 = Not a system member

**GWMEM2**

Status of first target in interstate system given by Gleditsch and Ward (1999).

1 = System member

0 = Not a system member

**TARGET3**

Target of use of force. Either Correlates of War state abbreviation or name of non-state actor.

**TARNUM3**

Correlates of War state number of target state, if any.

Missing data = 0

**COWMEM3**

Status of first target in Correlates of War interstate system.

1 = System member

0 = Not a system member

**GWMEM3**

Status of first target in interstate system given by Gleditsch and Ward (1999).

1 = System member

0 = Not a system member

**CONSENT**

Consent of target state(s) for use of force.

1 = Target state(s) granted consent

0 = Target state(s) did not grant consent