
Report on MIDs that could not be found*

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Abstract

Report on Correlates of War Militarized Interstate Disputes (MID) that could not be replicated. In most cases, we provide a short narrative as it relates to the countries and dates described in the MID data.

Version 1.6—October 2017

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Version History

Version 1.1—October 2013

Version 1.2—January 2014: Added three disputes (MID#1164, MID#2076 and MID#2077 to the list of cases that could not be found.

Version 1.3—February 2014: Several changes were made based upon a meeting with Correlates of War MID personnel at UC-Davis and our further research after the workshop. These changes include:

- New information for two disputes led us to recommended keeping the MIDs—MID#1101 with no changes and MID#3000 with minor changes to the original coding
- New information led to keeping four disputes with major changes to the original coding (MID#2036, MID#2363, MID#2364, and MID#3401)
- New information led us to recommend dropping four disputes from the MID dataset (MID#1255, MID#2015, MID#3655, and MID#4178). See our drop report for an explanation of these cases.
- We also moved one case from our drop recommendations to this report—MID#1028

Version 1.4—March 2014:

- Added MID#2078 and MID#2368 (changed from dropped case)
- Moved the following cases to the drop recommendations following original source information from the Correlates of War Project: MID#1028, MID#1149, MID#1150, MID#1164, MID#1183, MID#1501, MID#1509, MID#1526, MID#2076, MID#2077, and MID#2134
- Moved MID#2829 to the drop recommendations after further review of additional sources
- Moved MID#1594 to the keep with changes recommendations list based on original source information from the the Correlates of War Project
- Added MID#2012, MID#2148, MID#3420, and MID#3867 after further review

Version 1.5—September 2017: Added MID#1127 and MID#1128.

Version 1.6—October 2017: Removed MID#3434.

MID#1058

There is no record of a seizure by Thailand against Italy. Italy withdrew from the Axis powers in early September of 1943, and it is possible that Thai forces responded with some sort of seizure of Italian property or personnel. However, there is no historical evidence of this available.

MID#1127

This MID refers to an apparent incident between Saudi Arabia and Yemen in the area of Najran in early 1931. CoW cites Philby (1955) who mentions this passage only in passing on page 322:

“As had been the case before in the dispute over the ownership of the Khurma oasis, with King Husain taking the military initiative with a view to creating a *fait accompli*, it was the Imam Yahya who sought a settlement of the matters at issue with the Wahhabi king by pushing his troops into the areas claimed by him with the support of elements in both, which preferred weak Zaidi control to any closer acquaintance with the strong arm of Ibn Sa’ud. The inevitable clash of frontier guards ensued at a village called ‘Aru early in 1931. In the absence of reliable maps at that time it was not easy to determine in this case which side was the aggressor, though before long it became clear that the blame lay with the Wahhabi commander, who had unwittingly trespassed into Yaman territory.”

The next passage describes MID#1128, which we mention in the next item in this report. Both will have similar problems because Philby is the sole source for this incident. Worse yet, Philby provides no specifics about what happened here other than a vague description of what CoW would code as a clash. CoW coding this MID as occurring in unknown dates in January 1931 appears to follow Philby’s description of this incident as occurring “early in 1931.” We have only a vague description of a clash and a rough guess about when it happened. There is no other available information about it.

Philby is a reputable British Arabist and was close to Ibn Saud. We don’t dispute that this clash likely happened, certainly as more followed leading to the 1934 war. However, we could not corroborate this MID as coded and technically do not even know when it happened. The *Times of London* describes no such incident in all of 1931 to support what Philby describes here and help us fill in the details.

MID#1128

This refers to an apparent dispute between Saudi Arabia and North Yemen in the area of Najran. The Najran oasis was on the border of North Yemen, but the Saudis had been expanding as a state and on the cusp of announcing the Saudi Arabian state as we know it. Their expansive efforts brought them to Najran, which both states claimed but neither effectively administered. Philby (1955, 321-322) is the only source for this dispute. He is fairly reputable as a British Arabist and was a close associate of Ibn Saud. The problem is that his three sentences on this dispute constitute the entire information necessary for this dispute, and it is just unsatisfactory. This is the passage in question, on page 322:

“But in the winter of 1931/2 a more serious incident occurred, when a Yamani force descended on and occupied Najran, where the property of unfriendly elements was

destroyed. Their complaints forced Ibn Sa'ud to react vigorously; and during the spring of 1932 the Khurma chief, Khalid ibn Luwai, led a strong Ikhwan force to the scene, and had little difficulty in chasing the Yamani garrison out of the oasis and occupying it in the name of Ibn Sa'ud. The Najran issue was thus settled for good.”

The rest of the third sentence talks about the context in the rest of 'Asir, which sets up the 1934 war between these two states. But, that's it in terms of information for this dispute.

It's clear something happened here. However, we will never be able to verify the details of this MID independent of Philby. Philby is reputable as a source for the politics of Saudi Arabia at this time. He was also a close associate of Ibn Saud. That said, he offers no details of this dispute on which to build. We do not know the months in which it happened. Technically, we do not even know the year. We're not given great information about how to separate an attack from a clash or a show of force from an occupation of territory at the incident-level. We may ever know the full details of this incident. It may be lost to history.

The only other source that hinted at something around this time was Safran (1985, 54). This passage is even more vague and the book cites Philby extensively, though not in this passage. It stands to reason Safran read Philby and just reproduced part of the passage. This is the sentence in question: “The immediate cause of the Yemen war was a dispute over the oasis of Najran, on the border between the two countries, which the forces of Imam Yahya seized and from which the Ikhwan ousted them in the spring of 1932.

Kostiner (1993) makes no reference to this dispute. A *Times of London* search revealed no other corroborating material for this MID.

MID#1684

This case grew out of Italy's concern, beginning in early August of 1939, about the growing German and Russian influence in the Balkan states, as well as Hungary and Danzig, at the beginning of the Second World War. Concerns appeared to be quelled in February 1940, when cultural accords were signed between the two countries, and the accords were “couched in the warmest tones heard since the war apparently caused some discord in the Axis.” There is no evidence of a show of force by Italy targeting Germany during the period of this case, August 1939 to February 1940. The two states were allied and fighting together.

MID#1726

Moreno (listed CoW source) does not mention this dispute. There actually does not seem to be any reference to Argentina at all (since the book covers Central America). This is the only CoW source for this dispute, and there is no other evidence of a dispute in 1916 between France and Argentina.

If the dispute is anything, it is a momentary seizure of Argentinean cargo en route to Germany during World War I. Argentina was an important player in the world market for some grains and beef and was a trading partner of Germany in particular. However, it is unclear how France could be in a position to detain Argentinean cargo en route for Germany unless the detention occurred in Morocco. A search for that did not produce results. CoW's source citation did not apply to this

dispute. Finally, even if there is evidence of a detention, additional coding rules about seizures still apply (24 hour rule, protest, et cetera).

MID#1735

CoW's source, the annual register, provides no information on this dispute. There are hostilities in Greece during this time, and Canning comes to Greece to discuss the conflict in September. However, there is no information about a possible dispute between the Ottomans and any of the Italian territories during this period.

MID#1900

The details of this case mirror those of the Red Crusader seizure (MID#2883), except the month is listed as March instead of May. No information could be found regarding any Danish seizures of British shipping on or around this date. Too, the reports of the Red Crusader incident do not mention a previous seizure anytime near this date.

MID#2012

MID#2012 is a bilateral dispute between Argentina and Paraguay from unknown days in December 1850 to January 1851. It is coded as a blockade by Argentina (Side A), reciprocated with an occupation of territory by Argentina. It ends in a yield by Paraguay. It is coded using Gilbert Phelps' (1975) *Tragedy of Paraguay* and Harris G. Warren's (1949) *Paraguay: An Informal History*. However, there is no discernible evidence to corroborate the coding of this dispute as originally presented. Though Warren (1949) is listed as a source, the passage in question comes from Phelps (1975, 44).

The Paraguayan President, desperate to break the blockade, again sent an army under his eldest son's command, temporarily to occupy the left bank of the Parana, in the hope of bringing pressure to bear on Rosas. On Christmas Day, 1850, he also entered into an alliance with Brazil, whereby both countries promised to help each other if either was attacked by the Argentine Confederation.

The problems with the coding of this dispute are multiple. First, we cannot corroborate a start date of December 1850. Though Phelps says this is the date when Brazil and Paraguay entered into a defensive alliance against Argentina, it does not mean this is the date of the incident. As a lot of these "informal" or "introductory" history books are wont to do, the narrative skips across years and actors without adequately situating proposed militarized incidents within a specific window of time.

Second, we question the coding of Argentina as Side A in this militarized incident. The blockade described as a militarized incident is actually a blockade started several years earlier. This is MID#1586, not a new militarized incident.

Third, Argentina had multiple blockades in effect against both Paraguay and Uruguay. This led to reprisals from both the United Kingdom and France (MID#0123). Adequately isolating militarized incidents described in these sources and distinguishing them from other militarized disputes (with CoW's coding rules) are difficult. Information is scarce and overlapping.

Fourth, we are unsure if Phelps is actually describing a show of force according to CoW's coding rules.

Fifth, we find the outcome of a yield by Paraguay to be questionable. If anything, Argentina's fortunes sink shortly after this proposed MID. Urquiza (Rosas' top general) turns on him (Rosas) during the intermittent civil wars in Argentina in the 19th century. This happens days after that Paraguayan show of force. Brazil signs an anti-Rosas alliance with Paraguay and Rosas is gone from Argentina in a year after this incident.

All told, we have very little to no codeable evidence of this MID independent of other MIDs currently in the data set. We moved it to the "could not find" category as a result.

MID#2056

There is no evidence of an attack by the Soviets on Germany on November 12, 1936. The Soviets did round up several German citizens in Soviet Russia for trials of espionage, from November 10th to November 16th. There is also some tension regarding shipping lanes near Spain during the Spanish Civil War. However, there is no evidence of a militarized dispute on this date, in November of 1936, or even the surrounding months.

MID#2078

Specific sources listed as the London Times, New York Times, and Moraga. The only mentions of an event in July of 1909 in the London Times and the New York Times involving both Argentina and Chile, is a conference in which Argentina was chosen to arbitrate and award the disputed area of Acre to either Bolivia or Peru. Argentina awarded the land to Peru, at which point Bolivia severed diplomatic ties with Argentina. Chile was on the side of Bolivia in this dispute and advised them to mobilize troops.

While Chile advised Bolivia to mobilize troops they wanted to make sure that Argentina was not part of the dispute. Another source states that says the accusations of Chile sending arms, etc. to Bolivia is false (even if true, this would not necessarily be a militarized dispute). The main issue here is between Bolivia and Peru/Argentina. Chile while having sympathies for Bolivia, remained neutral. Chile denies any claims that they were going to war and/or taking Bolivia's side militarily.

MID#2148

This case is coded as a clash between South Africa and Zaire on April 26, 1977. The specific CoW source suggests Facts on File was used to code this incident. However, we can find no evidence for a clash between these two countries in that source or in any others.

Zaire was battling Shaba rebels at this time according to Facts on File. The conflict was internal. Adamson Mushala, the leader of the rebels, had been given asylum in South Africa in 1975, but he was kicked out of the country in December of that year. Newspaper sources speculate that Zambian villages might have been sympathetic to Mushala, but, again, there were no clashes.

MID#2368

In January of 1887, both France and Germany were building and fortifying barracks and garrisons. With rumors of possible war, the German prince asserted that statements made in January regarding the build up of French armaments was intended as a warning, one that, though mild, would be enforced with greater strength if necessary (St. Louis Post). However, this was not a threat to declare war.

MID#2702

MID#2702 is a bilateral dispute between Russia and Japan. It is coded as occurring between August 1919, and October 25, 1919. It consists of one militarized incident, which was a Japanese seizure that was unrequited by Russia.

There is no real historical record for what this incident actually is. It is worth noting that the two sources cited for this MID are Leong (1976) and Pollard (1970), who are authors of works on Chinese foreign relations. These sources are very useful for MIDs involving China since the fall of the Qing Dynasty (and to the 1930s or so), but these books have never documented a MID for which China is not a participant. Regardless, there is no description of these disputes in either source. Nothing was found in Fischer (1951) or Unterberger (1956) that documented this incident either.

MID#2722

MID#2722 is a bilateral dispute between Russia and Japan. It is coded as occurring between the dates of April 28, 1920, and September 23, 1921. It is coded as a Japanese occupation of territory that was unrequited by Russia. It ends in a negotiated stalemate.

This dispute is likely connected to MID#0510 in some way and probably concerns the continued intervention by the Japanese in Siberia after the World War I Allies conceded defeat on the issue. However, there is no record of any incidents separate from that dispute.

MID#3116

This case is listed as a threat to use force by Yugoslavia against Soviet Russia, one day after the death of Tito. There is no evidence of such a threat. Yugoslavia pledged to continue non-alignment, and the Soviets gave many reassuring messages that it would respect Yugoslav policies. This is not a militarized incident.

MID#3321

There were two circumstances heightening tensions between Russia and Turkey during this time period, resulting in speculations of possible war in the future (though no such incident ultimately ensued.) The first is a territorial dispute between Russia and Turkey, particularly over the city of Parga. The dispute dates back to two treaties from 1800 and 1815, respectively. The Treaty of 1800 between Turkey and Russia, in part, left Parga to the Turks, though its people resisted, keeping Turkish attempts to occupy the territory at bay. The Allied Powers in the Treaty of 1815 reexamined the circumstance, placing Parga and a few other territories in the protection of England, who in May 1817 consented to hand the territory over to Turkey. However, a clause stated that every inhabitant of Parga could elect to quit their territory and Turkey would be have to pay them the value of the land in order to attain and occupy it. All of the population chose this option. The value of the land came to far greater than what Turkey was willing to pay for it. Russia agreed to the conditions of the dispute arranged between Turkey and England and no directly-related militarized incidents occurred. The second was another territorial dispute over the demarcation line between Russia and Turkey, which was resolved diplomatically.

There were reports from August 6, 1817, which is probably what the original coders must have been referring to. They state that Russia had united its sixth and seventh corps and was reinforcing its

troops in Volhynia, and also that Turkey was at the same time fortifying key posts along its border frontier with Russia. It is unclear whether these actions were explicitly directed towards the other state. There is no sign of protest from either state regarding these actions, and one source affirmed that the states had agreed to amicably resolve their discord and that the actions had nothing to do with preexisting tensions (Morning Post 8/6). Another source, also from August 6th, stated that the disputes between Turkey and Russia were terminated with no threat of war on the horizon (Caledonian Mercury). Even the source that described the militarized actions spoke of Turkey's fortifications saying that it was "taking advantage of the present state of peace" (Morning Post 8/6).

MID#3420

MID#3420 describes an Israeli seizure against Egypt/Syria/UAR beginning on September 14, 1958 and released on September 18, 1958. The specific sources list Haaretz and the New York Times as sources, but no evidence of this seizure could be found in either source. If there is an incident here, it also occurred less than two months prior to a 2-year dispute between Israel and Syria/UAR (MID#3419) and in the middle of a 4-year dispute between the same states, Israel and Egypt/UAR (MID#3375).

MID#3716

On September 3rd 1943, Canadian and British troops crossed the Strait of Messina and landed on the Italian mainland. That same day Italy and the Allies signed an armistice, which was an unconditional surrender. It was not announced until September 8th when the Allies deemed it was a better time to publicize it. A threat to use force seems unlikely, and, regardless, this case officially occurs during World War II and should be subsumed by it.

MID#3810

MID#3810 is coded as a one-day attack by Spain on France on January 10, 1940. No evidence of this attack can be found in the New York Times, which is the specific source listed by CoW for this dispute. Further, we have reason to doubt this attack occurred given that both countries were in the midst of finalizing a trade pact (on January 14th) that took three months to negotiate.

MID#3862

This case is coded as an attack by Germany four days after the Hungarians joined the Tripartite Pact (they joined on 11/20/1940, and the incident is coded as 11/24/1940). There is simply no evidence of this attack.

MID#3867

MID#3867 is coded as a one-day British seizure against Greece on January 31, 1941. New York Times is listed as the source, but no information is available for this event in that paper or any of the other sources we searched. Further, the British and Greeks were actively cooperating during this time against the Italians in World War II, which makes the likelihood of this event occurring doubtful, at least as it is currently coded.