Project Summary

Intradispute Bargaining: Collecting and Coding Individual Incidents in the Militarized Interstate Dispute (MID) Data, 1816-2001

Douglas M. Gibler, University of Alabama, Amount Requested: $236,167.00

Both policymakers and scholars care greatly about military bargaining between states and between leaders, but no large-scale data resource exists to adequately test our theories. I seek funding to change that by collecting, coding, and analyzing *incident-level* data for all Militarized Interstate Disputes (MIDs) from 1816 to 2001. The current MID data is the most widely used international relations dataset, but even this data provides only summary measures of combatant interactions. The data includes the start and end dates, highest hostility and fatality levels, and the final outcomes and settlements. There is no data on the evolution of conflict within the dispute, when fatalities occurred, or what actions were taken by each combatant. The most recent extensions of that data—to 2001 and the current update—change this for a limited temporal span by including incident-level actions. This grant would extend that effort, improve the data, and make the data compatible with the temporal domains of almost all studies of conflict. Together with additional variables for the connectedness of each militarized action, the location of the incident, and the number of civilian fatalities, we will finally have very precise conflict data over an incredibly long temporal span.

Intellectual Merit

Theoretical insights in the international relations literature continue to advance, but the ability to test specific propositions from these theories remains limited, due primarily to a lack of data on the specific incidences of conflict. Our good summary data most often provides only indirect measures of what happened during these conflicts and, hence, an inappropriate sample for tests of our theories. By changing the level of precision in quantitative tests of conflict, this data is likely to change the nature of empirical testing in international conflict for a very long time.

Broader Impacts

What causes international conflict is of course a central concern of policymakers and scholars, and this dataset would provide the opportunity to study the causes of conflict at a level of precision that has never before been realized over such a large temporal domain. Thus, this data will potentially have a very broad impact on society, policy, and scholarship. In terms of education, this proposal also integrates numerous undergraduates and graduate students into the process of discovery and understanding. Over the past two years, I have involved almost 30 undergraduate students in projects derivative of my previous NSF-funded project, which will continue if this proposal is funded. These students have started considering graduate education and research careers at a much higher rate than their peers, and many of these students have benefited from attending academic conferences. The *majority* of our undergraduate researchers have been from groups that are traditionally underrepresented in political science (female and African American). In Alabama, these types of programs often provide underrepresented groups and first-generation college students their primary exposure to science and discovery. This will continue if the project is funded.

This is a revised version of a proposal I submitted during the last funding cycle. That proposal received very positive reviews, but most of the reviews also noted that I needed to clarify the procedures I will use for data collection and provide a better description of my measure of militarized incident connectedness. I do both in this revised version, under the section heading titled "Procedures for Data Collection". The rest of the proposal remains relatively unchanged, though it has been shortened elsewhere to accommodate the changes.

Results from Prior NSF Support

Does Force or Agreement Lead to Peace?: A Collection and Analysis of Militarized Interstate Dispute (MID) Settlement, 1816 to 2001, *SES#0923406*
Douglas M. Gibler and Karl R. DeRouen, Jr., 8/1/09 to 7/31/11, $205,291.00

As we argued in our proposal, most empirical studies find that imposed settlements and settlements that reflect the capability distributions within the dyad last longer than most negotiated settlements that end conflicts. However, this conclusion is unwarranted because the data available prior to our project (1) did not accurately reflect the heterogeneity across settlement types, (2) was biased toward a highly selected sample of cases, and (3) was biased toward more recent cases of settlement. To address each of these selection problems, we collected and coded every negotiated and imposed settlement that ended a Militarized Interstate Dispute (MID) between 1816 and 2001. We found that the substance of an agreement does matter, and those negotiated settlements that actually addressed the issues under contention did last longer than other settlements. This was true even after controlling for the distribution of capabilities across combatants. We also collected information regarding the enforcement mechanisms used in the treaty, the presence of third-party mediators and guarantors, and the specifics of the negotiation process.

Data collection for this grant ended last summer, but we have nevertheless already produced several working papers and datasets. The papers include two pieces directly related to the data gathering effort—a review of the MID endings data and a separate analysis of the relationship between dispute endings and the duration of peace, which provides strong confirmation that the substance of the political settlement controls the likelihood, duration, and level of peace between combatants. Our datasets include a qualitative archive of all settlement treaties, pronouncements, and exchanges, as well as the dataset produced with our 100-item coding sheet for these cases. These datasets will be released to the public within the next calendar year, or immediately following publication of the related papers. Preliminary reception to our work has been quite positive—for example, the Folke Bernadotte Academy (Sweden) has given us $38,456 to collect information on mediation prior to settlements.

Additional Information Collected–Creating an Infrastructure for Coding

During our original data collection for the settlement project, we noticed a very high error rate in the original, pre-1993 MID data. This is understandable given both the size of the dataset constructed and the limited bibliographic tools that were available to the original coders. The errors in the dataset frequently included miscodings of the MID termination dates as well as the type of settlements used. Therefore, we also began a systematic cleaning

of the original dataset, focusing initially on the cases that were most likely to include nego-tiated or imposed settlements (as per the interests of the original project). We will complete the entire cleaning process by December of 2012 and will release the results of the study and a list of suggested changes soon thereafter.

As part of this cleaning process, we developed a comprehensive bibliographic database for the original MID project that includes at least two references for every single case. Actually, in most cases, the number of sources used for each dispute numbers ten or more. This bibliographic database is comprehensive enough to allow coding of the incidents in each dispute case. We have found each dispute, have confirmed the coding of the overall case, and have source information for the conflict. Coding the individual incidents that comprise these disputes will be time consuming but straightforward.

1   Project Description

I am asking for funding to complete an important extension of the MID data. We currently have incomplete incident-level data that covers only the 1993 to 2001 period, and even this set of data does not code for the connectedness of actions between combatants. Few have used this data because the incidents fail to identify whether specific actions are reciprocal, escalatory, or de-escalatory. This lack of data is frustrating because we have many theories of conflict that provide specific implications for decisions made in response to conflict initiation, escalation, and de-escalation. These theories remain untested.

To provide one example of this argument, I use this proposal to provide a preliminary assessment of several propositions in the audience cost literature. Coming to prominence with Fearon's (1994) influential model of domestic political accountability, few studies, if any, have provided proper tests of the original audience cost argument. Indeed, though the literature is theoretically rich, the best empirical studies we have, after almost twenty years of development, rely mostly on dispute reciprocation (Partell and Palmer, 1999; Schultz, 2001a; Weeks, 2008). Reciprocation is the only data available to assess the effects of audience costs, but it is hardly equivalent to Fearon's expectations regarding *within* crisis bargaining.

The need for this data is also evidenced by the MID Project's current reliance on incident-level data to build disputes. The 1993 to 2001 extension of the MID data (for which I was a co-PI) collected incidents first and then joined the incidents into disputes based on the temporal sequence of the incidents and the issue(s) involved. The current extension of the data is proceeding similarly, using computer-assisted searches for news stories on incidents. The differences in collection methods may introduce biases between old and new MID data, but, more importantly for this proposal, the recent emphasis on incidents provides good evidence that incident-level data is valuable.

I think many would initially consider the collection of incident-level data for the pre-1993 MIDs to be too difficult. There are over 2,000 MIDs, many of which were poorly sourced and difficult to find. Nevertheless, the infrastructure created by my previous grant— well-trained graduate and undergraduate students as well as bibliographic resources for all MIDs—provides a unique opportunity to gather this important data. As I detail above and in the methods section of this proposal, we have identified almost every single case of the original MID data and we have good source information. Therefore, creating the incident-

level data, though time-intensive, is quite feasible.

Ultimately, since the incident-level data would be invaluable for the field of international relations, I have focused this proposal on the likelihood of general interest in this dataset. However, I began thinking about the need for this data due to my own research on the effects of territorial issues. As I also demonstrate in this proposal, territorial issues among neighbors can seriously constrain leaders—so much so that the bargaining process associated with such theories as audience costs tends to break down. Territorial issues force responses by targeted states, and, with military forces engaged against neighbors, few states are powerful enough to bargain seriously with other states over other issues. I discuss later the implications of this argument and how it will affect tests of the audience costs propositions and bargaining more generally.

The rest of the grant proceeds as follows. First, I briefly outline the audience cost literature, and I discuss the empirical tests that followed Fearon's (1994) initial argument. I then develop my argument regarding the constraining effects of territorial issues. I follow with preliminary tests that use the limited incident-level data that is available, and I then close with a discussion of the projected plan for research.

2   The Audience Costs Argument

Originating with Thomas Schelling's (1960) discussion of credible commitments, audience costs are the domestic penalties (e.g. removal from office) that leaders may suffer if they back down from a public threat during an international crisis (Fearon, 1994). This added cost of backing down adds credibility to leader threats, thereby providing a more informative signal to other leaders than capabilities or other observables. Audience costs have been used to explain a variety of international interactions, but most studies have focused on the unique ability of democratic leaders to signal their intentions and the effects this has on the peace between democracies (Fearon, 1994; Eyerman and Hart, 1996; Schultz, 2001b,a; Partell and Palmer, 1999; Gelpi and Griesdorf, 2001).

When leaders hold private information regarding their capabilities and resolve, cooperation becomes challenging. State leaders have an incentive to bluff in order to coerce greater concessions from the other actor. Therefore, the ability to differentiate between cheap talk and credible information becomes critical to both avoid losses and win concessions. While leaders can often deduce reliable assessments of opposing capabilities, understanding an opponent's resolve is more difficult. How does one distinguish between a bluffing leader and one who is resolved to carry through their threat? The key is to determine whether the likely cost of backing down is higher than any expected gains the leader may find in a reversal. If the cost of backing down is higher, then the threat becomes more credible and can serve as an informative signal of resolve.

Leaders may sometimes engage in escalatory behavior to generate domestic audience costs. The escalation signals their resolve, and the check of the audience adds credibility to the signal. The intent of the escalation is to coerce the opposition into yielding the issue short of war. This type of escalatory behavior can, however, also lead to war when opposing leaders publicly constrain themselves from backing down (Slantchev, 2006). Thus, leaders seeking to avoid war will generate audience costs selectively and avoid engaging state leaders

who also possess means and motives to generate audience costs (Schultz, 2001*b*). This logic serves as the foundation for a variety of empirical regularities, especially those associated with the democratic peace (Fearon, 1994; Schultz, 2001*a*; Gelpi and Griesdorf, 2001).

2.1   Empirical Examinations of Audience Costs

Eyerman and Hart (1996) were the first to empirically test Fearon's argument. Though temporally limited due to the nature of the SHERFACS conflict management dataset they used (1945 to 1984), their findings were consistent with the conflict behavior expectations cited by Fearon. Partell and Palmer (1999) provided some confirming evidence using dispute outcome data and a revised coding of audience costs based on executive constraints. Their study also confirmed a signaling advantage for high-audience cost states.

A few observations are worth noting from this early exchange of studies. First, the descriptive statistics of the MID outcome variable reveal the general infrequency in which states back down in a dispute when measured using dispute outcomes. In the Partell and Palmer sample of 1,463 dispute cases, one side backed down in only 123 cases. As they note, the likelihood of either side backing down in a dispute is almost equivalent to the dispute escalating to war. Put differently, there is very little variation in tests using MID data that can properly assess actions associated with either escalation or de-escalation. This problem is not abated when the dependent variable is dispute reciprocation since only the initial response by the challenger is (weakly) identified. As Schultz (2001*a*, 142-143) notes, the data is divided roughly in half by disputes that are reciprocated. Further, as I note in other work (Gibler and Hutchison, N.d.), there are real problems assuming that the lack of response is due to an audience cost advantage rather than the target's involvement in war or its ignorance of the challenger's action, but even these problems are outweighed by the assumption that poor audience cost advantages are the primary explanation for reciprocation.

Second, the Partell and Palmer findings suggest that democracy was a strong predictor of MID outcome, but the executive constraint measure was an even more effective predictor. This observation has led more recent studies to argue that some autocracies are also capable of generating audience costs and that the assumed relationship between democracy, audience costs, and international outcomes may be misleading (Slantchev, 2006; Weeks, 2008).

Finally, the emphasis on conflict outcomes has obscured the fact that Fearon (1994, 585) had explicit expectations for the empirical regularities within public disputes. First, the state least able to generate audience costs was most likely to back down once a crisis began, and, since democratic leaders generally have higher audience costs than other states, democracies are unlikely to back down following their threats. Second, these higher audience costs for democracies make other states shy away from democratic targets; this implies fewer crises targeting democracies. Further, since democracies are also more likely to avoid limited probes or bluffs of other states, democracies will then be more peaceful in general. However, when democracies do actually engage in crisis bargaining, the clarity of their signals implies that democracies will tend to take fewer steps to escalate the crisis and demonstrate their resolve. This suggests several direct tests of Fearon's (1994) model even within what is likely to be a biased set of revealed cases (Schultz, 2001*b*).

3 Issue Salience, Territory, and Audience Costs

One underlying assumption in almost all these empirical studies is that the content of the issue causing the crisis is inconsequential. The focus on regime type and the microfoundations of the theory have led most studies to set aside the obvious fact that crises mostly vary in intensity because the issues under contention also vary in salience to both leaders and publics. The public's motivation to punish may stem not from disagreement with the leader's positioning but instead be a reaction to the leader's ability to win or survive a difficult crisis. Some issues, like territorial issues, are so salient to the public at large, even credible challenges to the status quo will be met with resistance by the target. In this section I outline the implications of this type of issue salience and discuss how the absence of territorial issues in democracies may affect our understanding of audience costs.

3.1 The Salience of Territorial Issues

Among the issue classifications used by the Correlates of War datasets, territorial issues are much more likely to end in war than disputes over regime type, policy, or any other issue (Vasquez, 1993, 1995, 2001, 2009; Senese and Vasquez, 2008; Vasquez and Henehan, 2001). Vasquez and Henehan (2001), for example, find that over 50% of all wars (53 of 97 in their dataset) are fought over territorial issues. This confirms an earlier study by Holsti (1991) which found that 79% or more of the wars since 1648 have been fought over territory or territory-related issues (see also Vasquez, 1993, 128-131). The results are not limited to wars either. Compared to other issue types, territorial disputes also generally have higher fatalities (Senese, 1996), are more difficult to resolve, and are more likely to recur (Hensel, 1998). Together, these results confirm a higher rate of conflict for territorial issues which implies higher salience for the countries affected by these issues.

From the perspective of the individual in a targeted state, territorial issues often present a direct threat to their homes, lives, and livelihoods (Gibler, 2012). Land provides shelter in less-developed countries and often constitutes one's greatest asset in more advanced countries. Thus, targeting the land with occupation implies a threat to both shelter and economic well being. Of course, territory also holds more than economic value for most individuals. As Vasquez (1995) describes, most individuals have strong attachments to their homes and birthplaces. This attachment is often encouraged by groups within society who socialize the individual with myths and legends, signs and symbols, education, and religion that all equate particular lands with ethnic and national groups (Duchacek, 1970; Paasi, 1996; Tuan, 1991). This socialization reaffirms that threats to territory will be equated with threats to individual identities.

Territorial issues tend to lead to a centralizing effect within public opinion that is often nationalistic and intolerant of minority groups (Gibler, Hutchison and Miller, 2012; Hutchison and Gibler, 2007). Similarly, domestic opposition groups in both democracies and non-democracies expect strong public reaction to territorial issues and respond strategically by supporting the leader; the leader then centralizes his institutional power within the regime (Gibler, 2010, 2012; Gibler and Tir, 2010). These strong domestic reactions to territorial issues, which include both behavioral and institutional changes, indicate that domestic audiences pay attention to territorial issues. These centralizing tendencies also encourage a

correlation between territorial issues and non-democracies and peace and other issue types and democracies. In other words, democracies tend to rest in peaceful neighborhoods or are more likely to confront easier-to-resolve issues.

One need not go so far as to argue that territorial issues cause regime type changes to note that the types of issues facing democratic leaders is indeed systematically different from those facing other regime types. Indeed, studies of democratization have generally associated democracy with peaceful regional environments (Gleditsch, 2002; Gleditsch and Ward, 2006), and ample evidence suggests their issues more likely concern trade, fishing rights, and the like (Mitchell and Prins, 1999; Kalbhenn, 2011). There may even be electoral reasons for democratic leaders not to fight over territory (Bueno de Mesquita et al., 2003).

Each of these lines of inquiry suggests that democracies will not have territorial issues on their agenda and are, therefore, much less likely to face issues that will galvanize the public enough to generate audience costs for the leader. So, while Tomz's (2007) findings are probably correct that citizens in democracies will punish their leader for backing down during crises, the public itself rarely has such an opportunity. Instead, democratic citizens enjoy safety from direct threats and worry more about the economy, taxes, and their and their family's prospects for the future.

3.1.1 Democracies' Issue Agendas and Audience Costs

Citizens need to know the content of foreign policy positions in order for the leader to generate audience costs (Slantchev, 2006). As importantly, the citizens also need to care. Not all foreign policies will be salient since crises vary so widely in their importance to the average individual. Most seizures of ships or goods by foreign powers, for example, matter little to the average individual who is unaffected by the outcome of the crisis. Contrast these cases, however, with high-salience issues—those that involve the potential loss of homeland territory. In these cases the issue's salience connects the audience to the leader, and credibility is attached to the leader's threat once the public is interested in the outcome.

But these cases of escalation with high audience costs are likely to be selected by the leader. If highly salient issues like territory are removed from the agenda of states, the leader then has a much greater ability to choose those international issues that they wish to escalate. Smart leaders are of course likely to use whatever bargaining advantage they have—including any audience cost advantage—on those issues that favor victory. For most non-vital issues, then, the likelihood of demonstrating strong audience costs will be endogenous to the probability of a targeted state backing down (Schultz, 2001*b*).

4   Some Preliminary Evidence

The third iteration of the MID data collection project provided incident-level data for each dispute, 1993 to 2001. These incidents are the events that comprise a dispute—from the first threat of force to the final event in the dyadic dispute. Thus, they provide the opportunity to examine for the first time the escalation (or deescalation) *within* a dispute rather than relying on the highest level of action or hostility level used throughout the conflict.

4.1 Backing Down in a Public Dispute

Fearon's (1994, 585) first prediction is that higher-audience-cost states are less likely to back down in a dispute: "Thus if actions such as mobilization generate greater audience costs for democratic than for nondemocratic leaders, we should find the democracies backing down significantly less often in crises with authoritarian states." Partell and Palmer (1999) tested this proposition using MID outcomes, and they were especially struck by the relative infrequency of states backing down during disputes. However, with backing down defined only as yields by the target or victories by the challenger, their original dispute-based coding of backing down may entirely miss the many cases of states de-escalating into a stalemate or even a compromise. The bargaining process within a dispute is likely to include a series of steps, and failed *status quo* challenges could provoke backing down so that the challenger can draw a stalemate or work out a negotiated compromise. These are of course missed with end-of-dispute coding of outcomes, as Partell and Palmer (1999, 393) note.

To better test the proposition that high-audience-cost states are unlikely to back down, I created a two-part dependent variable that identifies whether a state de-escalated their hostility level *during* a dispute and the overall outcome of the dispute. Hostility levels include (1) no militarized action, (2) threat to use force, (3) display of force, (4) use of force, and (5) war, and these are defined for each incident within a dispute based upon the hostile action that was taken. I define backing down in a dispute as Partell and Palmer (1999) do—the presence of a victory by the target state or yield by the challenger—but I also include cases of stalemate or compromise that contained the de-escalation of hostilities by the challenger.[1] These are cases of bargaining in which the challenger backed down into a stalemate or compromise with the targeted state.

My independent variables for these and subsequent models replicate the reciprocation-based measures used in (Schultz, 2001*a*; Weeks, 2008), except for two changes. While the dispute reciprocation studies controlled for the presence of joint democracy, Fearon (1994) had explicit predictions for cases in which the audience costs of challenger and target diverged. Therefore, rather than include a dummy variable for disputes between democracies, I instead control for democratic challenges against authoritarian states, with authoritarian states defined as -7 or below on the Polity IV scale. I also change the interaction term to assess the prediction that regime type behaves consistently across issue type. Finally, I include a dummy variable for democracy-versus-autocracy challenges made over territorial issues. Since the dependent variable is dichotomous—the presence (or absence) of backing down in a dispute—I use logistic regression with standard errors clustered by dispute to estimate the model. The results are presented in Table 1.

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[1]It is interesting to note that a large majority of de-escalatory moves occur in the disputes with a stalemate outcome. There are 136 disputes in which the challenger acted in ways that were less hostile than previous actions in the dispute; 104 of these de-escalated disputes ended in stalemates. The five categories of victory (side A or B), yield (side A or B), and compromise only had 18 de-escalations combined. Almost 60% of the de-escalations ending in stalemate (58 of 104) concerned territorial issues while the remaining cases were equally split across other four issue categories.

Table 1: The Likelihood of Challengers Backing Down, 1993-2001

Variable	(1)	(2)
Initiator is Democracy	0.842	0.664
	(0.619)	(0.597)
Target is Democracy	-0.882*	-0.939*
	(0.433)	(0.426)
Democratic Challenger vs. Authoritarian Target	-2.082*	-3.272*
	(0.908)	(1.389)
Initiator's Share of Capabilities	-0.221	-0.174
	(0.484)	(0.472)
Contiguous	0.601	0.737†
	(0.406)	(0.417)
Status Quo Evaluation of Initiator	3.541*	4.421*
	(1.424)	(1.754)
Status Quo Evaluation of Target	-1.429	-1.908
	(1.479)	(1.693)
Territory	4.918**	4.691**
	(1.565)	(1.595)
Territory X Dem Challenge of Authoritarian Target		2.920*
		(1.393)
Policy	3.885*	4.022**
	(1.524)	(1.558)
Constant	-5.574**	-5.411**
	(1.967)	(1.984)
N	369	369

Logistic regression predicting whether a challenger backs down in a public dispute; robust standard errors clustered on directed dyad. Variabes for Major state versus minor state, minor versus Major, alliance portfolio similarity, and regime and other issue categories, were statistically insignificant and omitted from this table to save space; see (Gibler and Hutchison, N.d.) for full results.
† $p < 0.10$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

I present two models in Table 1 to demonstrate the effects of adding the interaction term for regime predictions over territorial issues. Model 1, without the interaction, confirms Fearon's assumption that democracies are unlikely to back down against non-democracies (p<0.05). The strategic setting is indeed important as democratic challengers seem to have no intrinsic likelihood of de-escalating the dispute. This is also true of the capability-based indicators since these have no effect on the likelihood of a challenger backing down. Strangely, for the original model at least, challenges against democracies are less likely to result in backing down. These regime estimates are found while also controlling for contiguity and disputed issue type, each of which is associated (to varying degrees) with an increased probability of the challenger backing down. There may also be some systemic influences in the model since similarity with the system leader increases the likelihood that the challenger will back down.

Model 2 introduces the interaction term of democratic challenges to autocracies over territorial issues, and this variable is positive and statistically significant (p<0.04). This suggests that democracies are *more likely* to back down when confronting non-democracies over territorial issues. Of the 369 cases of dispute in my sample, there are only 17 instances of democracies challenging autocracies over territorial issues, and the democracy backs down in 12 of those cases. The relationship between democracy and backing down over territory seems to be strong enough, though few in total, to dilute the base coefficient of democracy versus autocracy, since the added control now makes these challenges substantively stronger.

Overall, these results provide support for my theory of territorial constraints following initial support for the original model developed by Fearon (1994). Democracies are generally less likely to back down against autocracies in public disputes, as Fearon predicted. However, much of this

behavior is conditioned by the types of disputes democracies face. When involved in territorial issues, democracies tend to de-escalate their hostilities and back down from their initial challenges.

4.2 Low-Level Disputes, or Limited Probes

Fearon (1994) also argues that "if democratic leaders tend to face more powerful domestic audiences, they will be significantly more reluctant than authoritarians to initiate 'limited probes' in foreign policy." The incident data for the 1993 to 2001 disputes allow another easy test of this proposition. I created a dichotomous variable for the presence of a limited probe by the challenger in which only 1 incident was initiated by the challenger during the dispute. Since Fearon's expectation seems to apply to all democracies, rather than democracies challenging autocracies, I use a dummy variable to indicate the presence of a democratic challenge over territory. Otherwise, the models remain the same as before, and I present the results predicting limited probes in Table 2.

Table 2: Predicting Limited Probes, 1993-2001

Variable	(1)	(2)
Initiator is Democracy	-1.191† (0.644)	-1.170 (0.757)
Target is Democracy	1.047** (0.406)	1.050* (0.412)
Democratic Challenger vs. Authoritarian Target	0.882 (0.605)	0.891 (0.601)
Initiator's Share of Capabilities	-0.547 (0.513)	-0.544 (0.510)
Contiguous	0.217 (0.423)	0.222 (0.415)
Status Quo Evaluation of Initiator	2.197† (1.332)	2.191 (1.349)
Status Quo Evaluation of Target	-2.726* (1.127)	-2.708* (1.098)
Territory	-2.655** (0.845)	-2.626** (0.856)
Democratic Initiator X Territory		-0.077 (0.693)
Policy	-1.999* (0.836)	-2.000* (0.835)
Constant	1.535 (1.358)	1.507 (1.348)
N	369	369

Logistic regression of a "limited probe" defined as 1-incident challenge; robust standard errors clustered on directed dyad. Variabes for Major state versus minor state, minor versus Major, alliance portfolio similarity, and regime and other issue categories, were statistically insignificant and omitted from this table to save space; see (Gibler and Hutchison, N.d.) for full results.
† $p < 0.10$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Once again Model 1 finds support for the regime-based expectations of the model. Democracies are unlikely to pursue limited probes of their rivals (p<0.07). Further, limited probes are unlikely to target democracies. Differences in regime type between challenger and target seem not to matter. These conclusions change with the addition of the interaction term, which controls for democratic challenges over territorial issues. Democratic challenges over other issues are no longer statistically significant at any conventional level, though challenges of democracies do tend to last longer than one incident. The only other effects consistent across both models include issue type (territory and policy) and the system similarity score of the target. Each of these variables predict disputes containing more than one incident initiated by the challenger.

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The results of these models again confirm the argument that the types of issues on the agenda of democracies control the likelihood of observing audience cost effects empirically. Democracies behave as expected over non-territorial issues, with lower likelihoods of conducting limited probes. However, when the disputed issue concerns territory, there seems to be no regime-type advantage.

4.3 Threat Credibility

The final prediction of Fearon's (1994) model that I test concerns escalation in disputes involving democracies: "When large audience costs are generated by escalation, fewer escalatory steps are needed to credibly communicate one's preferences...Thus crises between democracies should see significantly fewer escalatory steps than crises between authoritarian states" (585-586).

Table 3: Predicting within Dispute Escalation, 1993-2001

Variable	(1-Incidents)	(2-Incidents)	(3-Escalation)	(4-Escalation)
Initiator is Democracy	-0.102 (0.257)	-0.157 (0.261)	1.305* (0.560)	1.204* (0.552)
Target is Democracy	-0.214 (0.195)	-0.217 (0.194)	-0.645 (0.451)	-0.628 (0.458)
Democratic Challenger vs. Authoritarian Target	-0.062 (0.262)	-0.301 (0.272)	-1.470* (0.615)	-1.779** (0.687)
Initiator's Share of Capabilities	0.330 (0.227)	0.346 (0.226)	0.245 (0.581)	0.287 (0.576)
Contiguous	0.083 (0.146)	0.109 (0.149)	0.782† (0.423)	0.799† (0.422)
Status Quo Evaluation of Initiator	-0.228 (0.571)	-0.051 (0.539)	0.857 (0.797)	0.983 (0.793)
Status Quo Evaluation of Target	0.473 (0.593)	0.383 (0.585)	-2.434* (0.993)	-2.433* (0.996)
Territory	1.141*** (0.231)	0.995*** (0.255)	3.619*** (0.692)	3.496*** (0.710)
Territory X Dem Challenge of Authoritarian Target		0.891* (0.415)		0.913† (0.518)
Policy	0.695*** (0.204)	0.690** (0.223)	2.815*** (0.658)	2.878*** (0.677)
Constant	0.194 (0.459)	0.240 (0.480)	-2.857* (1.116)	-2.864* (1.138)
lnalpha Constant			0.887* (0.393)	0.865* (0.392)
R-squared	0.588	0.598		
N	369	369	369	369

OLS is used in Models 1 and 2 to estimate the (natural log of the) number of incidents initiated by the challenger. Negative binomial regression is used in Models 3 and 4 to estimate the number of escalations in hostility level by the challenger. Standard errors are again clustered by dispute. Omitted from the table is a dummy variable in each model that controls for the dyadic incidents of NATO vs. Serbia (see text). Also excluded again are variabes for Major state vs. minor state, minor vs. Major, alliance portfolio similarity, and regime and other issue categories; these were insignificant and omitted from this table to save space; see (Gibler and Hutchison, N.d.) for full results. † $p < 0.10$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Again, the incident data can provide some empirical leverage to test these propositions. I therefore created two dependent variables to measure threat credibility. First, I totaled the number of incidents in the dispute initiated by the challenger and used the natural logarithm of this measure since the event data is highly skewed. My assumption with this measure is that challengers will need fewer threats in order to convey their resolve. The second dependent variable is similar to

the dependent variable used in the Eyerman and Hart (1996) study. I identified the hostility levels of each incident to calculate the number of escalatory moves by the challenger. I sum these escalations for each dispute. Since this sum is a count variable, with variance greater than the mean, I estimate the models using a negative binomial regression, clustering the standard errors on the dispute. Table 3 presents my findings.

Models 1 and 2 use the total number of incidents as the dependent variable, and, as can be seen in the table, there are few regime-based effects in either model. More importantly, democratic challenges only seem to matter over non-territorial issues. In Model 1 democratic challenges are not statistically significant at any meaningful level; these challenges only have an effect once the challenges over territory are specified with the interaction term. Further, democratic challenges over territory are more likely to have numerous incidents, which further suggests that the level of democracy only conditions the clarity of signaling over certain issues.

To help confirm these results, I estimated Models 3 and 4 with the number of escalatory steps as the dependent variable. The results from Model 3 confirm regime effects for escalation—democracies are likely to escalate more often against democracies and non-authoritarian states but much less often against authoritarian states. These findings are consistent with the original Fearon model. Issue types also have an effect since disputes over territorial and policy issues tend to have more escalatory moves on average. Model 4 adds the interaction to predictions of escalation and finds that democracies have more escalatory moves than average when their challenges are against authoritarian states over territorial issues. There are only minimal substantive effects on the other variables in the model due to the addition of the interaction term.

The results using two separate operationalizations of challenger signaling suggest that democracies can, in fact, signal better in public disputes than other types of regimes. However, again, that signaling advantage is limited to non-territorial issues. Democracies behave like other states—or, are even worse at signaling—when territorial issues are contested. Democracies have more incidents in their territorial disputes, and they have more escalation attempts. In signaling terms, democratic threats over territory tend not to be credible.

4.4 Preliminary Conclusions and the Need for More, Better Data

With just nine years of available incident data, I have been able to provide preliminary confirmation of Fearon's (1994) early predictions and also demonstrate support for my own theories based on the constraining effects of territorial issues. Again, however, these results are preliminary for a reason: there is just nine years of available data. Further, the new update of the MID data will not improve the relative dearth of incident-level data since it will add fewer than 10 additional years. This is perhaps one reason so few scholars have used the incident-level data in their research; it also may explain the lack of empirical tests of Fearon's seminal argument and the reliance on indirect measures of bargaining like reciprocation and outcomes.

Aside from the limited temporal domain of existing incident-level data, there still remains the problem of connectedness. We do not know whether incidents occurred in isolation or in response to actions undertaken by a rival combatant. My initial survey of the post-1992 incidents suggests that explicit bargaining will sometimes be difficult to find in these disputes. A plurality of disputes are small scale, containing only one incident; these are the easy cases. The disputes where bargaining is most likely taking place, however, have myriad incidents that are, on first examination, random actions, lacking any type of escalatory (or de-escalatory) purpose or rationale. So, while my analyses treated movements across hostility levels as a way of assessing international bargaining, the assumption of connectedness is probably unwarranted. Therefore, I plan on coding the incident-level data using additional items that identify whether actions were in response to the actions of

the rival and the type of information that is available for us to make that coding decision. I plan to add this data to the existing incident-level data.
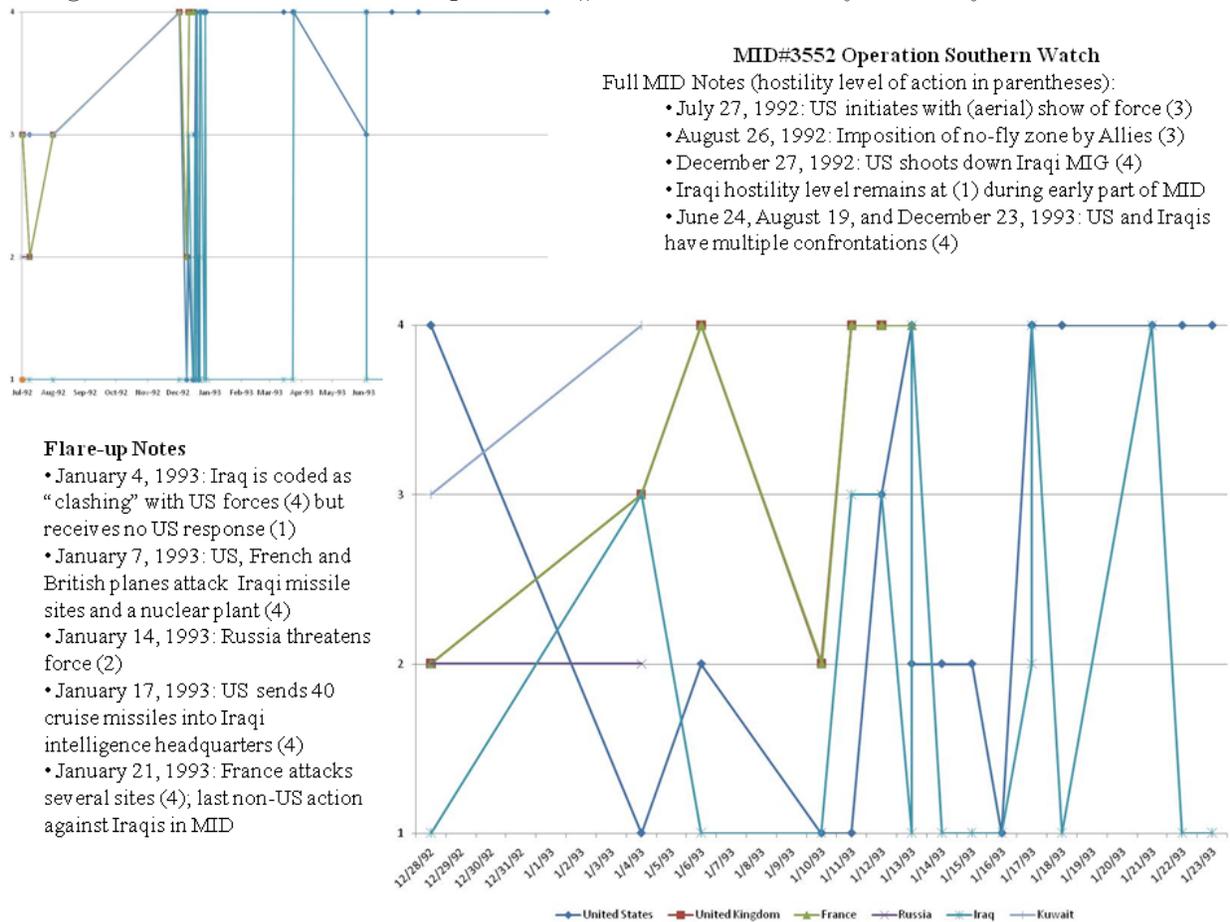
With connectedness identified, we will be able to precisely test the expectations of bargaining contained in the audience cost and similar literatures. We will also finally have leverage on the theories of bargaining that have developed from experimental and agent-based modeling studies, such as the various forms of tit-for-tat strategies. Indeed, tit-for-tat is a fundamental method of achieving cooperation in the conflict literature (Axelrod and Keohane, 1985; Keohane, 2005), but there is no way of testing this type of strategy with existing data. Intra-dispute data is needed.

I present another way of examining the possible benefits of using incident-level data in Figure 1. Here, I chart the incidents involved in MID#3552, also known as Operation Southern Watch, which involved the implementation of a no-fly zone and missile strikes against Iraq in 1992 and 1993. I chose this case randomly—it is the second MID (chronologically) with available incident data—, but I think the case is representative of the high-incident conflicts in the data. The MID dispute-level data lists this case as lasting from July 27, 1992 to December 23, 1993; the dispute ended as a stalemate (outcome) with no settlement. Fatalities were unknown. There were six countries against another country, and the hostility level reached 4 (use of force) with a highest action of 17 (clash). It is listed (erroneously) as non-reciprocated and, so, would therefore (improperly) confirm the audience cost advantage of democracies. The participant-level data lists Iraq as revisionist over policy (and reciprocates with a highest action of 17), against the United States, Britain, France, Russia, Kuwait, and Saudi Arabia. Iraq and the United States are listed as fighting throughout the entire dispute; Britain, France, and Kuwait are joiners, one month late, who end the dispute in January of 1993. Russia fights for eight days in January (a threat to use force), and Saudi Arabia fights for 4 days in July (with no highest action).

Figure 1 presents the 55 incidents in the dispute by date and hostility level. The chart is small, given the space allowed for this proposal, but I present both a reduced version of the entire dispute (in the upper-left portion of the figure) and a magnified view of the month following the shooting down of an Iraqi MIG by the United States. I stop the vertical axis at the highest hostility level in the dispute: use of force (4). Several interesting points are immediately apparent from this data. First, anyone interested in the evolution of conflict in this dispute will see that most of the fighting was limited to one month, with a few flare-ups between the US and Iraq later in the dispute. There is tension for almost two years but actual combat lasts only a couple of weeks. Second, bargaining is difficult to see from the plot of the data. US actions, for example, are inconsistent in terms of hostility level, jumping almost randomly across levels, and seldom mirror Iraqi actions until the end of the dispute. This underscores the need for the coding of connectedness in the data. Third, though there were six countries nominally against Iraq, the Allies were hardly a monolithic coalition. Britain and France moved in unison throughout their participation in the dispute and only really acted with the United States during the high combat month of January. Russia was involved only briefly and not really as an ally. Finally, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia were brought into the dispute after being attacked by Iraq; they were not really allied in their actions.

Of course the larger point to this plotting of incidents is to demonstrate the sheer amount of information that can be gained by examining more than summary indicators. Disputes are much messier than the summary statistics would have us believe. Though there have been calls to increase the amount of conflict and cooperation data available to researchers (King and Lowe, 2003), this proposal provides a relatively cheap way of greatly expanding existing, well-used datasets. This type of informational gain will provide the ability to answer key questions in many literatures that have previously relied on poorly specified empirical tests. The information gains may even be great enough to make us rethink these core theories, once they have been properly tested.

Figure 1: Incident Data Example: MID#3552's Incidents by Hostility Level and Date

MID#3552 Operation Southern Watch
Full MID Notes (hostility level of action in parentheses):
- July 27, 1992: US initiates with (aerial) show of force (3)
- August 26, 1992: Imposition of no-fly zone by Allies (3)
- December 27, 1992: US shoots down Iraqi MIG (4)
- Iraqi hostility level remains at (1) during early part of MID
- June 24, August 19, and December 23, 1993: US and Iraqis have multiple confrontations (4)

Flare-up Notes
- January 4, 1993: Iraq is coded as "clashing" with US forces (4) but receives no US response (1)
- January 7, 1993: US, French and British planes attack Iraqi missile sites and a nuclear plant (4)
- January 14, 1993: Russia threatens force (2)
- January 17, 1993: US sends 40 cruise missiles into Iraqi intelligence headquarters (4)
- January 21, 1993: France attacks several sites (4); last non-US action against Iraqis in MID

5 Procedures for Data Collection

Reviewers of my previous funding request were concerned that many of the MID cases would be difficult or even impossible to find. However, that has not been the case. We currently have identified, coded and have summaries and revised issue codings for over 2,000 MIDs. We will finish the remaining part of the data set (fewer than 400 MIDs) by the end of this semester. Our current drop rate—the percentage of MID cases that we argue are not MIDs or have no evidentiary record—is low. We have not been able to identify several MIDs, and we argue that approximately 30 should be dropped from the dataset as they were not disputes according to Jones, Bremer and Singer (1996). Thus, we will begin the project with a clean dataset of cases that has excellent source information for each dispute.[2]

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[2]As a previous reviewer of this proposal pointed out, the original MID data were supposedly based on incidents as well, but that data was never released by the Correlates of War Project because it was incomplete and error prone. This data is not really relevant to our collection effort any more, though, because we have cleaned the MID data and have good source information for each dispute. I should also mention that Mike Tomz and Jessica Weeks have an ongoing project to generate MID summaries from 1946 to 2001. That project will be useful for comparing summaries to the ones I have already collected, and, when its complete, we can use that data to potentially aid the data collection of incidents for more difficult cases if they have additional or different sources for any difficult-to-code disputes.

5.1 Variables Collected

I will follow the coding procedures we originally used for the extension of the MID project from 1992 to 2001. With only a few significant emendations, the coding forms and procedures that were developed for that project will serve very well here. These individual incident codes include: dispute number, incident number, start date, end date, fatality level of incident (and precision), the militarized action code, the hostility level of the action, number of participants on each side, and the issue codings. Each of these variables is well described on the Correlates of War site and have been widely used by most scholars in dispute- or participant-summary form.

I would also add three sets of variables to this data collection framework. First, I will code each incident location which will allow future GIS tagging of conflict dynamics by other scholars. Location data has been added to the general summary MID data (Braithwaite, 2010), but this variable would allow an assessment of location changes as complex disputes progress. Second, I will add a variable that identifies civilian fatalities in the incident (and the coding precision level). Civilian fatalities are not collected by the MID data currently, but they are of growing interest to various scholars. In my experience almost all incident reports list civilian fatalities in addition to military fatalities. Finally, I will also code each incident for its level of connectedness to other incidents. This connectedness approach is described in the next section.

5.1.1 Identifying Connectedness

A real impediment to evaluating bargaining during international conflict episodes is the lack of an identifier for how one state's actions affect another state's actions. Even with the incidents since 1992, bargaining must be assumed even if the incidents were not related empirically. I would change that by developing a measure of connectedness for each incident in the data. This measure would be based on a four-part categorical variable that assesses the rationale behind the particular militarized action. These codes are 1=stated response, 2=military response, 3=general preparedness, 4=unrelated.

A stated response is, as the name implies, a militarized action which the leaders announce is a response to the actions of another state. Military responses are actions that match well the actions of the other state in the dispute but for which the leaders provide no public announcement that the action is in fact a response. General preparedness incidents are militarized actions that may provide some advantage should conflict escalate but the action itself is not a direct counter to the militarized action of the other state and there is no leader announcement of a response. Finally, unrelated actions are those militarized incidents that are not directly related to any previous actions of the rival but represent new strands of actions within the dispute. The connectedness coding would always be followed by a separate variable for the relevant incident number of the militarized action of the other state.

Thus, for example, a neighboring state may increase its troop levels along the border, and the leadership announces that it is fortifying its border as a response to its aggressive neighbor. This would then indicate a "1=stated" response to the incident number identifying the troop buildup. Without the public pronouncement, the border fortification would be coded as "2=military match" since the second militarized incident is a military maneuver explicitly designed to match the actions of the first militarized incident. Had the state mobilized its forces instead, but failed to send them to the border, then it would be coded as "3=preparedness". A blockade of the rival's port or similar action unrelated to the initial troop mobilization would be coded as unrelated.

In one sense we can think of all actions as possible responses, but there is a substantial difference between an action that is a stated response or even a military match to the actions of

another state and other militarized actions, and this is especially true when thinking in terms of a bargaining framework. I would rely on qualitative assessments of our source material to determine the connectedness of each militarized incident. Stated responses are of course easy to identify. The difficulty will be distinguishing between matches and preparedness, and, in ambiguous cases, I will document well the rationale supporting each coding.

5.2 Timeline of Data Collection

Again, given our established infrastructure, collecting incidents from this MID data should not be difficult. We already have very good source information for all disputes that we have analyzed. We also have several already-trained coders who are familiar with the MID dataset. We are also unlikely to get overwhelmed by the number of incidents in each case. Indeed, we have generally found the early, pre-World War II cases to be similar to the post-1992 cases. In this later set, 48% of the disputes (196 cases) have only one incident initiated by the challenger; seventy-three percent of these disputes have 4 or fewer incidents. Thus, the incidents are not too numerous to code.

The actual data collection process will be straightforward. As I mention above, we already have source information for all disputes, and only in rare instances do I foresee the need to supplement this source information with additional searches. Thus, the data collection procedures will entail coding of existing news sources and other primary (and in some cases secondary) material for the relevant militarized incidents. I am asking for a two-year grant to cover the data collection effort. I am assuming, based on our previous assessments of the MID data, that there are three time periods that are roughly equal in the amount of time that will need to be spent by coders (1816 to 1912, 1913-1945, and 1946-1992), and I will initially devote one semester to each of these eras, focusing on the more recent cases first. That would allow an additional semester to cover any remaining, difficult-to-code cases and the coding of the 1993-2001 data for the additional variables of location, civilian casualties and connectedness.[3] I would also begin each semester with the approximately 25% of cases in that period that have 1-2 incidents only. These will (re-)familiarize coders with the MID data coding framework prior to the larger, more complex disputes. I would use the summer months for additional data collection and data cleaning. In other words, I am asking for funding only for the data project and not my own analyses that will be based on this data.

6 Significance of the Proposed Work

The current MID data is the most widely used international relations dataset, but even this data provides only summary measures of combatant interactions. The data includes the start and end dates, highest hostility and fatality levels, and the final outcomes and settlements. There is no data on the evolution of conflict within the dispute, when fatalities occurred, or what actions were taken by each combatant. The most recent extensions of that data—to 2001 and the current update—change this for a limited temporal span by including incident-level actions. This grant would extend that effort and make the data compatible with the temporal domains of almost all studies of conflict. I would also code for the connectedness of each action within the existing incident data as well as civilian fatalities and incident locations. This data is likely to change the nature and precision of empirical testing in international conflict for a very long time and would likely influence most studies of international conflict, including the literatures on conflict bargaining, conflict escalation, studies of fatality dynamics within conflict, conflict reciprocity, and conflict management.

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[3]Current MID practice does not code incidents during wars, but, if all goes well, I may be able to code these incidents, too.

7 Data Management Plan

7.1 Collection

We will collect additional primary source material and secondary historical reviews covering all disputes, based on our existing bibliographic database. In most cases, we already have the original sources in digital or print form.

7.2 Processing

We have approximately 80% of our source material in electronic form and are currently scanning the remainder to .pdf. The data is added to our College's network, which gives all coders share-based access to add files. Our working materials (codebooks and coding decisions, essentially) are shared using Dropbox. The data on the College network is backed up each evening; Dropbox provides a continuous archive.

7.3 Coding

We typically collect the information necessary for several disputes and drop that source material into the appropriate, MID-numbered folder in the network. We then copy the materials for coding into Dropbox. This allows easy access for all coders who may have questions during the coding of a case. The completed codebooks and any additional source materials are then added to the network drive.

7.4 Documentation

All materials have source information included in the electronic version of the data. All codebooks are numbered according to the dispute, and the source material for each dispute, including all incidents, is included as a line item toward the end of the codebook associated with that particular dispute.

7.5 Products

This grant will produce several data projects: the complete bibliography of the entire MID dataset (in printed alphabetical form, printed and sorted by dispute, and also in a BibTeXversion), a text-based dataset of all source materials referenced in the bibliography, original codebooks for each dispute, and a quantitative database of all codings from the project.

7.6 Distribution Policy, Archival Measures, and Publication

None of the data is likely to be sensitive since all materials are in the public domain. Therefore, I will openly share the bibliography, the original codebooks, and the quantitative database via an individual website for the project provided by the University of Alabama. Copyright laws prevent me from sharing the electronic files of original source material, so I will make those available to interested researchers upon request. All of this data will be available immediately after publication of the article that describes the data collection. I will also provide a Dataverse website for the project that will provide an easy way of archiving the datasets for future use.

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BUDGET JUSTIFICATION

Graduate Research Assistant

I am requesting funding for one graduate research assistant for each of two years. The cost of the graduate student includes their tuition, stipend, and benefits and a 5% per annum increase in tuition after the first year. I am also asking for limited summer funding for two research assistants: $3,000.00 per student each summer with a fringe rate of 7.7%.

Undergraduate Research Assistant

I have begun an undergraduate research program in political science at the University of Alabama through our Honors College. During the initial year, advanced undergraduate students were asked to hand code militarized incidents that were generated by computer-assisted event analysis from the NSF-funded group of Penn State researchers. My students were tasked with identifying and separating false positives and collating news stories for true positive matches of militarized incidents. The undergraduates did amazing work, covering several years of data. As a follow-up program, I created a course that taught similarly advanced students the basics of research design and then paired the students with active researchers to conduct original data collection. The program went very well, and now at Alabama there is a large group of well-trained undergraduate researchers with quite a bit of knowledge of the MID project. I would like to hire four (4) of these undergraduates each semester for ten (10) hours per week, fifteen (15) weeks per semester, with an additional 300 hours of summer work (30 hours per week for 10 weeks). I have previously paid undergraduate researchers $10 per hour. At this rate, yearly costs will be $12,000.00 during each academic year, and $12,000 during each summer.

Summer Salary

This is a large data collection effort, and I am requesting one-ninth, summer salary, to oversee and conduct primary data collection. Fringe benefits are calculated using the University of Alabama rate of 32%. A raise of 3% is also included for the second summer ninth.

Travel

The travel budget line covers the costs of two conferences each year to present the research from the grant. Each year is budgeted at $2,500.00.

Indirects

The University of Alabama negotiated rate for indirects is 47%.