Interstate War Data version 1.2
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This memo describes the changes made to Interstate War Data (IWD) v. 1.2 over IWD v. 1.1. IWD v. 1.0 and v. 1.1 are described in these publications:

Dan Reiter, Allan C. Stam, and Michael C. Horowitz, "A Revised Look At Interstate Wars, 1816-2007," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 60 (August 2016): 956-976.
Dan Reiter, Allan C. Stam, and Michael C. Horowitz, "A Deeper Look at Interstate War Data: Interstate War Data version 1.1," *Research and Politics* (October-November 2016): 1-3.

When using IWD v. 1.2, please cite the *Journal of Conflict Resolution* article.

The changes in IWD v. 1.2 include the following.

--Temporal range of the data has been extended forward from 2013 (the end of the temporal range for v. 1.1) to 2019.
--Addition of a 1941 war between the United Kingdom and Iraq.
--Addition of a 1981 war between China and Vietnam.
--Combining the 1984 and 1987 China-Vietnam Wars into a single 1984-1988 China Vietnam War.
--Addition of New Zealand as a participant in the Korean War.
--Addition of China as a participant in the Vietnam War.

These changes are discussed below. The final section of this memo discusses conflicts that have *not* been added, that is, it provides explanation as to why particular conflicts are not included in the data set.

New Wars

United Kingdom-Iraq War, 1941[1]

Iraq became an independent state (and Correlates of War (COW) system member) in 1932, achieving independence from Britain. Conditions of Iraqi independence included British rights to military bases in Iraq and to move British troops through Iraqi territory. Britain also retained control over Iraqi military and foreign policy. Anti-British sentiments grew in Iraq across the 1930s, and Iraq was officially a neutral in the early years of World War II. However, the Iraqi prime minister, Rashid Ali al-Gilani, was anti-British and refused to grant Britain basing rights after war broke out. Iraq also began to develop ties with Germany and Italy.[2]

[1] Thanks to Lara Gemar for research assistance on this episode.
[2] Lyman (2006, 8-11); Peretz (1994, 441-444).

In April 1941, Britain attempted to move British and Commonwealth troops to Iraq. When the troops began to land on April 17, Ali demanded that the troops leave the country, and Britain refused. Iraqi troops began to surround British bases in Iraq, and the Iraqi government threatened to attack any aircraft, vehicle, or person that attempted to leave any of the bases. Fearing an impending Iraqi attack, British forces attacked Iraqi forces surrounding the Habbaniya air base on May 2. Iraq retaliated by bombing the base.[3] Iraqi forces retreated from the base on May 6. During the five day siege, five British troops were killed. One source reports 500-1,000 Iraqi casualties, and another reports 1,000 casualties. Neither of those sources indicate whether casualties include fatalities only, or fatalities as well as prisoners and wounded (see below).

At the same time as the siege of Habbaniya, British troops landed at the Ashar wharf, capturing Basra and Shaibah. More troops landed in early May. As these forces traveled to reinforce Habbaniya, they were attacked on May 15 by some two dozen German aircraft. On May 19, British troops attacked and captured Fallujah. Three days later, Iraqi forces counterattacked unsuccessfully, inflicting 17 British fatalities. British and Commonwealth troops approaching Baghdad were attacked on May 27, suffering one fatality. British forces cut off Mosul by May 28, and the Iraqi government feared that Baghdad would be next. On May 29, Ali and forty other leading elites fled the country. The next day, the mayor of Baghdad asked for terms of surrender, and violence ended the following day.[4]

This is clearly a violent conflict between two members of the interstate system that are not otherwise at war, with a discrete starting point (May 2), ending point (May 31), and victor (Britain). Britain is classified as the initiator, because it is the first side to use force. Germany and Italian sent material aid and a trivial number of troops to the Iraqi side, not enough for them to be classified as belligerents.[5]

The most important question as to whether this conflict counts as a war is whether it reaches the minimum level of fatalities. Regarding British fatalities, the total number may have been in the low dozens, with official counts of 34 Royal Air Force personnel killed in May,[6] and one estimate of 13 British troops killed at Habbaniya and 17 more killed at the Battle of Fallujah.[7] Estimates of Iraqi fatalities are less certain, with one secondary source estimating as many as 1,000 casualties for the Habbaniya siege alone, though that "casualties" figure may include fatalities, prisoners, and wounded.[8] The British Middle East Commander during the war in 1956 publicly estimated 500 Iraqi fatalities.[9] In total, there is enough information available to conclude with high enough confidence that there were at least 500 fatalities, though likely less than 1,000 fatalities.

[3] Silverfarb (1994, 2-6).
[4] Playfair (1956, 183, 192).
[5] Playfair (1956, 195-196); Lyman (2006, 63-64, 91).
[6] Playfair (1956, 193)
[7] Lyman (2006, 51, 76).
[8] Dudgeon (2000, 99) estimates 1,000 Iraqi casualties on May 6 alone. Lyman (2006, 51) estimates 500-1000 Iraqi "losses" for the Habbaniya siege.
[9] Wavell (1946, 3439).

China-Vietnam Conflict in the 1980s

COW 4.0 includes a war between China and Vietnam in 1979, and then another China-Vietnam War in 1987. However, recent scholarship encourages a reexamination of this time period.

In general, there was ongoing violence between Chinese and Vietnamese military forces in the border region from 1979 to 1991, with more peaceful and more violent phases over this time span.[10] The central task is to identify the violent phases, and in turn make decisions about whether this time period was a continuous war, or was composed of separate wars.

The key data needed to make these assessments pertain to battle dead. Essentially the only data on battle dead comes from official Chinese sources, either official government publications, scholarly sources that rely on official Chinese sources, or official government statements given to Western journalists. Chinese government data may have inaccuracies, especially deflated counts of Chinese dead and inflated counts of Vietnamese dead. There are also reports from official Vietnamese sources, online reports, and unofficial accounts provided by veterans. Our summary relies on the translation of two Chinese official sources, and the small number of higher quality scholarly sources that in turn rely on a variety of sources. Those scholarly sources in turn make judgments on the quality of the variety of sources on which they depend.

We code the occurrence of two China-Vietnam Wars in the 1980s, in 1981, and 1984-1988. This marks two changes in IWD v. 1.2 over IWD v. 1.1. First, the 1981 conflict is completely new. Second, v 1.1 had two separate wars, one in 1984 and a second in 1987. V 1.2 combines them together into a single war fought from 1984-1988.

1981:

In September-November 1980, there were limited clashes between China and Vietnam, incurring perhaps 100 battle dead.[11] China launched a more significant offensive at Guangxi and Yunnan on May 5, 1981, with fighting lasting until about June 30. Chinese forces captured a number of hills from Vietnamese forces, and then repulsed Vietnamese counterattacks on these positions. China and Vietnam probably together experienced between 500 and 1000 dead, most likely between 800 and 900 dead.[12] We code China as initiating and winning.

1984-1988:

China launched the Laoshan Offensive with artillery attacks on April 2, 1984, and ground attacks on April 28, with fighting lasting through around July 12. China seized the hamlet of Na La and

[10] O'Dowd (2007, 89).

[11] Zhang (2015, 146) estimates roughly 47 battle dead, and the Yunnan Provincial Military District (1997, 425; hereafter YPMD) estimates 101 battle dead (thanks to Andrew Wagstaff for translation from Chinese). O'Dowd (93) does not provide an estimate of battle dead.

[12] Ni (2009, 647) estimates 705 Vietnamese dead from May 5 to June 31, and at least 154 Chinese dead during this time period (thanks to Alan Shen for translation from Chinese). YPMD (1997) estimates 571 total dead for the period May 7-June 11. O'Dowd (2007, 94) reports that each side lost "several hundred men," citing an unpublished 1987 conference paper. Zhang (2015, 147-148) appears to provide a higher estimate, 1408 total killed. He relies on Ni, as well as a Chinese language internet source that is no longer available.

several hills. There were very likely more than 1,000 battle dead in this conflict. For example, China initially estimated 1,080 Vietnamese dead on June 12 alone, but then on the basis of intercepted Vietnamese communications traffic increased that estimate to 3,000 Vietnamese dead.[13] There were also at least 268 Chinese dead during this time period.[14]

After the Laoshan offensive, there is somewhat of a lull in the fighting for about five months, before major conflict reerupts in December 1984. Specifically, China and Vietnam fought six major battles from December 1984 up through May 1985, during which time the Chinese First Army claims to have killed 5,007 Vietnamese soldiers, suffering 404 dead. From May 1985 through May 1986, China's 67th Army was deployed to the border, and participated in ongoing combat with Vietnamese forces. The 47th and 27th Group Armies were also deployed. From May 1986-April 1988, there was ongoing combat between Chinese and Vietnamese forces.

There were also clashes in January 1987. At the time, the Vietnamese government claimed to have killed 1500 Chinese soldiers, and Chinese government sources claimed that their troops killed some 200 Vietnamese troops.[15] Describing the COW data set, Sarkees and Wayman (2010, 175-176) claim 2200 Vietnamese dead and 1800 Chinese dead, listing two sources, the *New York Times* (1987) and Sagar (1991). However, the only *New York Times* articles on the January 1987 border clashes report fatality estimates in the hundreds (January 7, January 8, February 28). Sagar (1991, 156) notes that Vietnamese government sources claim 1500 Chinese dead, and that Chinese government sources claim 500 Vietnamese dead and wounded. It is not clear how COW arrived at a figure of 4000 dead in total.

Fighting and hostilities between China and Vietnam tail off in 1988, especially after Vietnam announced it would withdraw its forces from Cambodia. We code the war as ending when China halted its artillery attacks on December 20, 1988, an event that one scholar described as a "*de facto* cease-fire."[16]

There are two major difficulties in coding this war. The first is whether to view the 1984-1988 period as a single war, to view it as a period containing several wars, or even further to view the 1979-1988 period as a single war. Any approach taken inevitably involves a degree of arbitrariness, especially given the lack of fine-grained casualties and combat data across this period.

The second difficulty is coding the outcome. A primary motivation for Chinese aggression was to pressure Vietnam to withdraw from Cambodia. Given that Vietnam began to withdraw from Cambodia in June 1988, it is tempting to claim that the war was a Chinese victory. However, the Vietnamese decision to withdraw was likely also driven by the awareness in 1987 that Soviet support for Vietnam was in decline, as part of the larger trend towards the Cold War ending. Further, the core issue of concern for Vietnam in Cambodia was the possible participation of the Khmer Rouge in the Cambodian government, and by 1988 China made concessions on this point. Zhang (2015, 201) notes that "China's strategy—making the normalization of Sino-Soviet

[13] Zhang (2015, 156).
[14] YPMD (1997, 429-431).
[15] "Border Clashes With Vietnam Chinese Allowed to Recover Dead" (1987).
[16] Thayer (1994, 20).

relations contingent on Soviet pressure on the Vietnamese to withdraw from Cambodia—finally worked," but even that optimistic view is more like a victory for Chinese diplomacy than a victory in the China-Vietnam war. Indeed, Zhang (168) also comments, "On the battlefield, it is difficult to say who won." We code the war as a draw.

New Belligerents in Existing Wars

New Zealand's Participation in the Korean War

New Zealand needs to be added as a belligerent in the Korean War. New Zealand sent two frigates on August 1, 1950, as well as 1,500 ground troops that arrived on December 31.[17] Over the course of the war, 4,700 New Zealanders fought in the ground war under United Nations command in addition to the 1,300 who served in the navy.[18] Over the course of the war, New Zealand suffered 33 battle deaths.[19]

China's Participation in the Vietnam War

China sent substantial combat forces to North Vietnam during the Vietnam War. These troops engaged in non-lethal duties such as building and repairing roads, but also engaged in combat roles such as minesweeping and anti-aircraft missions. China sent a total of 320,000 troops to Vietnam between June 1965 and March 1968, with a peak of 170,000 troops in 1967. When Chinese troops were withdrawn in August 1973, a total of 1,100 Chinese troops had been killed.[20] During the war, the US government received intelligence reports of Chinese troops, including anti-aircraft units, being deployed to North Vietnam.[21] China also sent three regiments of MiG-17 fighters to defend North Vietnam from American aircraft.[22] We classify Chinese participation as beginning August 9, 1965, the first episode of Chinese troops engaging American forces in combat. On that day, Chinese troops used anti-aircraft guns to shoot down an American F-4 fighter jet.[23] We classify Chinese intervention as ending on March 15, 1969, as that was when the last of the Chinese anti-aircraft forces were withdrawn.[24] We classify China as initiating against the United States rather than South Vietnam, as the primary and secondary sources on Chinese intervention focus on Chinese engagement of US aircraft, not surprising given the relatively minor role played by the South Vietnamese Air Force during the war. We classify China as experiencing a draw.

Conflicts that are Not IWD Wars, and States that are Not IWD Belligerents

Taiwan-China-Burma, 1960-1961

[17] Kemp (1989, 51-52); McGibbon (1992, 58-74); "New Zealand in the Korean War."
[18] "New Zealand in the Korean War."
[19] Edwards (2013, 99-101); "New Zealand in the Korean War"; Sandler (1995, 246-247).
[20] See Zhai (2000, 135). See also Jian (1995) and Carson (2018).
[21] "Presence of Chinese Communist Troops in North-Vietnam in October 1965" (1967).
[22] Gaiduk (1996, 65).
[23] Jian (2001, 135).
[24] Jian (2001, 226). Carson (2018, 213) concurs with March 1969 as the termination of Chinese intervention.

After the 1949 Communist revolution, several thousand Kuomintang (KMT) troops loyal to the Chinese Nationalists were left in Southeast Asia, especially in Burma. This force maintained a loose relationship with the Taiwanese government for several years. In 1960-1961, Burmese and Chinese troops attacked this force, and there were likely more than 500 battle dead. One source suggests at least 721 KMT KIA.[25]

This conflict is not included in IWD 1.2, because it is not a conflict between two states. By 1960-1961, the KMT force located in Burma was probably best characterized as an irregular military, rather than a military force within the structure of the Taiwanese military, though the Taiwanese government maintained contact with the force, and provided it with aid. Specifically, when the connection between the force was tighter in 1950, the force was called the Yunnan People's Anticommunist Volunteer Army, and was commanded by a KMT officer who was the former leader of the 8th Army, General Li Mi. However, in 1953, Taiwan officially stopped supplying the army, and publicly ordered all KMT troops back to Taiwan.[26] In 1954, Li Mi announced the formal dissolution of the force, though several thousand troops remained in Burma.[27] From the beginning, the force included warlords, militants, and bandits alongside KMT forces.[28]

North Korea in the Vietnam War

In the 1990s, a North Korean defector claimed that some 800 North Korean pilots flew combat missions during the Vietnam War, of which 80 were killed in combat.[29] Even if true, this would not qualify North Korea as a combatant, as North Korea neither contributed 1000 troops nor suffered 100 battle dead.

Soviet Union in the Vietnam War

Members of the Soviet armed forces were sent to North Vietnam during the Vietnam War, their primary rule being to advise North Vietnamese troops on the use of Soviet weaponry, especially Soviet anti-aircraft equipment and aircraft.[30] The available information on Soviet involvement in the Vietnam War is scattered and inconsistent. A 2008 *RT* article states that 3000 Soviet troops "fought" in the Vietnam War.[31] A 1991 Russian magazine article reported that official estimates were of five thousand Soviet troops deployed to Vietnam, though Soviet veterans estimated 12,000 to 15,000.[32] A 1965 American intelligence report estimated that there were 1500-2500 Soviet military personnel in North Vietnam. A 1967 report from the Soviet embassy in Hanoi

[25] Chen (2011, 43).
[26] Tan (2009, 182-183). Thanks to Alan Shen for translation.
[27] Chen (2011, 41).
[28] Chen (2011, 40).
[29] "North Korean Air Force Pilots Fought in Vietnam War" (1998).
[30] Toperczer (1998, 12). See also Carson (2018).
[31] "USSR 'Secret' Vietnam Soldiers Speak Out" (2008).
[32] Mineev (1991, 32). Thanks to Ekaterina Koposova for translation.

stated that there were 1,165 Soviet military experts in North Vietnam at the time.[33] One source estimates 13 Soviets killed in combat in Vietnam from July 1965 to December 1974,[34] a second estimating 18 Soviets killed in action.[35]

Certainly, Soviet troops in North Vietnam offered technical advice to North Vietnam on operating Soviet-supplied weapons. There is also suggestive evidence that Soviet troops engaged in at least some combat, including operating Soviet-supplied surface-to-air missiles, and Soviet pilots perhaps engaging in air-to-air combat with American aircraft, as part of their mission to train North Vietnamese pilots.[36] After the war, the former Soviet ambassador to North Vietnam claimed that Soviet troops operated the missiles as early as April 1965. Three American planes were shot down that month.[37] Some American pilots guessed that they sometimes were facing off against Soviet pilots when facing enemy MiGs, if the MiGs had different camouflage designs or were being flown by pilots with clearly superior skills.[38] Other American pilots were more doubtful, based on both their own experiences and on the intelligence they were given during the war. One American pilot remarked after the war, "We do think the Russians were flying training missions, test missions, and instructing on the ground, but we do not have any knowledge they were flying combat missions…From everything we know, there were nothing but North Vietnamese flying combat." Another reported, "I was told specifically that our monitoring of their radios, and the information we had gathered from the North Vietnamese, was that they would not let their [North Korea, Chinese, and Soviet] advisers fly when we had a strike mission going on."[39] A 1989 article in the Soviet military publication *Red Star* claims, based on interviews with veterans and diary entries, that Soviet soldiers operated SAMs and shot down at least two dozen or so American planes.[40] One Soviet officer claimed that combat operations involving Soviet troops ended in November 1966.[41]

Based on the available information, we conclude there is not enough information to conclude that the Soviet Union participated in the Vietnam War, according to IWD coding rules. It does not appear that at least 100 Soviet troops were killed in combat. Though more than 1,000 Soviet troops were sent to the Vietnam War, there is not evidence to conclude confidently that at least 1,000 participated in combat missions, in the sense of flying combat missions in fighter aircraft or directly operating SAM sites. It is more likely that a small number of Soviet troops actually operated SAMs, and probably very few (if any) Soviet pilots participated in aerial combat with American planes.

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[33] Gaiduk (1996, 61).
[34] Krivosheev (1997, 282).
[35] Blagov (2001, 27).
[36] Gaiduk (1996, 61) refers to Soviet "technicians, pilots, and SAM operators" sent to North Vietnam during the war. One online article (Zampini, 2012) claimed that the Russian air force has conceded that Soviets pilots during the Vietnam War participated in combat as part of training missions, and that one Soviet pilot in 1966 shot down six American aircraft, killing at least one.
[37] Mineev (1991, 28).
[38] Eg, Broughton (1969, 80).
[39] Both quoted in Michel (1997, 297).
[40] "Soviet Advisers Saw Combat in Vietnam, Military Newspaper Says" (1989). Davies (2011, 42) also claims that Soviet crews operated SAM sites starting in 1965 and for at least two years after that, "causing some resentment among Vietnamese troops."
[41] Mineev (1991, 30).

Soviet Participation in the 1969-1970 War of Attrition

Soviet troops operated surface to air missile batteries sent to Egypt during the War of Attrition. The Soviet Union also sent Soviet-piloted MiG-21 fighter aircraft. However, the numbers of troops sent and casualties experienced are probably below IWD participation thresholds. Perhaps 100 MiG-21s were sent, for example. Also, the Israelis generally avoided combat with Soviet-piloted planes, with the notable exception of shooting down five MiGs on July 30, 1970.[42]

Russian Intervention in Ukraine, 2014-2018

There were credible reports of Russian troops intervening in Ukraine to assist secessionists as early as 2014. There are also reports of those troops clashing with Ukrainian forces, and there are estimates of thousands Ukrainian government, rebel, and perhaps Russian combat fatalities across the conflict. This is clearly a case of one nation-state intervening in the internal conflict of another state. COW treats several similar episodes, such as foreign intervention in the Spanish Civil War, as an internationalized civil war rather than an interstate war, though COW does not provide specific criteria for making this classification. IWD follows COW's lead, and does not classify the Russia-Ukraine conflict as an interstate war.

[42] Pollack (2002, 93-94).

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