MME Codebook v1.0

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Defining a Multinational Military Exercise

Multinational military exercises (MMEs) are cooperative, non-combative simulations undertaken by the militaries of multiple states intended to improve future military cooperation. Exercises, commonly referred to as war games, are said to occur when the militaries from more than one state interact in such a way as to enhance their ability to carry out future military operations, be it combat, disaster relief, counter-terrorism, etc. As such, MMEs are goal-orientated and a voluntary form of military cooperation.

Military exercises are strategic. Although they serve practical purposes like improving troop readiness and interoperability, MMEs also have political implications ranging from boosting a state's status to disguising military buildups. Different types of MMEs serve different purposes; some are meant to signal a commitment or a willingness to get involved in a conflict or to deter aggression, while others are held as a coordination exercise among members of the same international institution.

Several prominent actions that do not qualify as MMEs are:

- Port calls;
- the transfer or sale of arms/armaments, or any subsequent training associated with such exchange;
- the training of one state's military by another state without explicit or implicit intent to cooperate in the future;
- investment in one state's arms industry by a foreign state;
- holding meetings, summits, conferences, etc. to discuss or sign agreements about holding exercises in the past or future;
- the creation of a security-related institution like an alliance, security organization or defensive cooperation agreement (DCA);
- any unilateral show of force like a military parade, training between different branches of the same state's military, or freedom of navigation operation (FONOP).
- Troop exchanges

These data are collected at the level of the MME. That means every row or observation corresponds to a single MME. Certain exercises consist of multiple phases in different times and places, while other series of exercises are sometimes referred to by a single name (eg Autumn Forge); exercises are coded as described in the text. As part of the Helsinki Agreement of 1975 and later the Stockholm Accords (1986) and Vienna Document (2011), it has become an international norm to provide neighboring states with advanced notification of the exercises. It

has also become a norm to invite observers from neighboring states, international organizations and major powers. At this time, we do not code observer states, only participating states.

Exercise Identification

All MMEs coded in this dataset are identified via Lexis Nexis. An initial batch of around 125k news stories was pulled using the following search criteria:

pub(Xinhua OR The Times London OR DPA OR The Gazette Montreal OR Japan Economic Newswire OR Interfax OR Jerusalem Post OR New York Times OR CNN OR UPI OR TASS OR AFX OR AFP OR AP OR BBC) AND hlead(milit! OR war!) AND hlead(exercis! OR train! OR simulat!) AND NOT hlead(million OR sports OR lifestyle OR tax cuts OR entertainment OR Wall Stree OR baseball)

Two thousand of these stories were then manually coded as exercises/not, which served as the seed for an algorithm to sort the entire initial batch by likelihood of containing information on an exercise. The 40k stories deemed most likely were then manually tilled and coded.

Many exercises were connected (see *SeriesName* variable below), indicating a series and thus served as points on a timeline. For exercises deemed to be part of a series, individual LexisNexis searches were performed to check for additional series instances between the found instances and for two years on either end. In many cases, stories explicitly mentioned when a series started.

Not all variables are available for all exercises. If information is unavailable for a specific variable, it is coded -9 (except for dates, see below). Note that information being unavailable is distinct from being unsure about a coding (again, see below).

Many stories come from non-English sources; in some cases these stories were published in English while other times they were translated by an intermediary. Unclear translations are common but generally straightforward to decipher. Some odd language appears in the text fields (see below).

Variables

- *MMEID*
  Unique identifier for each exercise coded by the data collection team.

- *ExerciseName*
  Name of the specific MME from the story text.

Examples: Cobra Gold 96; Ulchi Focus Lens.

Excludes the word ‘exercise’ or ‘operation’.

Many unrelated exercises share names, especially those including the word ‘cooperative’ or those with generic names like ‘Passex’ (naval passage exercise) or ‘Sarex’ (search and rescue exercise).

- *SeriesName*
  Identifies separate exercises as part of an iterated sequence of cooperative events. Excludes year and other extra characters. For example, "83 Osprey 4 B" is trimmed to Osprey.

  Exercises are considered iterations of a Series if three or more instances of an exercise with the same base name (i.e. trimmed) and roughly the same participant coalitions occurred in a 10 year period. We chose this temporal constraint because many exercises are designed as bi- or tri-annual (occurring every other or every third year) and to account for iterations cancelled due to weather, finance, or other conflicts.

  Some non-English exercise names get different translations from the original. Example: ‘Boyevoye Sodruzhestvo’ (original Russian) is alternatively translated as ‘Combat Commonwealth’, ‘Military Partnership’, and ‘Military Commonwealth’. SeriesName contains the original language wherever possible.

- *Location*
  The location(s) of the exercise as described in the text of the news story.

- *Lat*
  Latitude coordinate based on Google Maps API’s interpretation of *Location* field.

- *Long*
  Longitude coordinate based on Google Maps API’s interpretation of *Location* field.

- *StartDate*
  Date the exercise began in the format: yyyy-mm-dd. If missing the precise day, format as yyyy-mm-xx. If the start month is not clear, set as the end month.

  Dates for a given exercise may be reported differently across stories; either because they refer to different points in the exercise (eg opening ceremony vs first day of live fire training), because of a time zone difference between location of exercise and publisher, or because a story is vague (eg ‘started this week' or ‘since last month’). If multiple stories indicate different dates, then the coder chooses which to document. Usually these dates are within several days of each other.

- *EndDate*
  Date that the exercise ended formatted as: yyyy-mm-dd. If missing the precise day, format as yyyy-mm-xx. If the end month is not clear, set as the start month.

  Discrepancies are handled in the same manner as *StartDate*.

  For exercises with multiple phases that are potentially separated by periods without training, this variable is the final date associated with the exercise.

- *CPX*
  Binary field that denotes purely theoretical, table-top exercises, that do not involve the physical training of troops.

- *Domain*
  A domain is an "Area of activity within the operational environment (land, air, maritime, space, and cyberspace) in which operations are organized and conducted." (TP 525-3-1).

  MME domains are coded based on the nature of the training, *not* based on the branch of military that troops come from; air force soldiers can practice land maneuvers and the navy has pilots of its own. Helicopter involvement is tricky as they can be used in any domain (aside from cyber).

  Exercises may concern multiple domains (non-mutually exclusive); each has a separate binary (0/1) field. Coders use their judgement when assigning this field. If the domain was unclear, all individual fields are zeroes.

    - **Air**: included aeronautical maneuvers
      - **Note**: many maneuvers that are primarily land- and sea-based include air support but are not primarily about the air domain; such exercises do *not* list air separately;
      - Examples (quoted from text): air defense exercise; increasing joint combat and commanding capabilities of the air forces; practice air mobile operations; warplanes made simulated air strikes; fighter pilots fly missions in as close to a wartime-like setting as we can simulate; focus on dogfight and air attack on warships; airborne and airdrop missions; focused on interoperability in operations planning, aerial refueling and air-to-air operations; conduct dissimilar basic fighter maneuvers training; close-air-suport training, tactical airdrop training; jointly repel a large-scale attack by the enemy aviation;
    - **Land:** included ground force maneuvers by infantry, tank, artillery, or other equipment; includes land-based anti-air maneuvers;

        - Examples (from text): involves the mobilization and deployment of the Special Forces Group's operational base; a hill assault against simulated enemy positions; infantry exercise dealing with special operations; combined-arms operations in mountainous desert terrain to counteract international terrorism; simulating the defence of a command post, jungle survival and navigation training; international exercise of military police units; firing exercise involving various types of light weapons and firearms; an engineering activity to develop infrastructure and engineering skills; trained in urban operations amid the special facilities; troops will have a parachute jump demonstration; joint formations in combined air operation and low altitude operations;
    - **Sea:** included naval/maritime activity or sailing; includes submarine activity; includes sea-based anti-air maneuvers;
        - Examples (from text): training together in anti-submarine, anti-aircraft and over-the-horizon, anti-ship warfare; artillery firings, work on finding and defusing mines and torpedoes and carrying out rescue operations at sea; improve combined maritime warfare procedures and tactics; international mine-sweeping exercises; naval tactical maneuvering and supply exercises; train to assisting vessels in distress, tactical maneuvering, naval combat and air defense; drills in conventional naval warfare to exercises that integrated maritime security settings; coast guard-led maritime interdiction exercise; held an operation to evacuate civilians from the simulated conflict zone; train participants in halting ships carrying nuclear materials; rescue at sea, medical aid, commercial ship control and joint communication; offshore operations including search snd rescue, refuelling at sea, containing attacks by divers;
    - **Amphibious:** included water-to-ground landing maneuvers
        - **Note**: many amphibious operations include air, land, and sea support; if the story describes other domains as merely supporting the primarily amphibious maneuver, then they should *not* be listed separately.
        - Examples: navy and marines will hold a landing exercise; introduction to amphibious operation using inflatable dinghies; improving inter-operability for amphibious, land, sea and air activities; conducted a joint amphibious landing;
    - **Cyber:** included computerized transfer of information
        - Examples: computerized war games; simulates a large-scale cyberattack

- *Focus*
  The stated or implied goal of the military exercise. Separate binary fields included for each individual focus (non-mutually exclusive). MMEs with unclear focus are coded as all zeros.
    - **Warfighting**: intended to improve states' ability to fight together in future operations against violent opposition.

        - Example (need citation): The U.S. military is going to hold a major exercise in Central America, but it is not connected with the expected start of an offensive by American-backed rebels in Nicaragua, a military official says. The official, who spoke only on condition he not be identified, confirmed Sunday that an exercise involving thousands of American troops would be under way soon in Honduras and other countries in the region. But he insisted the operation was not timed to coincide with what U.S. officials have said is a spring offensive by the Contra rebels fighting Nicaragua's leftist Sandinista government. "That's a routine exercise," the official said of the American operation, code-named Solid Shield. "Obviously, it's been in the planning stages for a long period of time."Solid Shield is held every other year, he said. The number of troops involved in the Honduran portion of the exercise "would involve something less than 10,000 U.S. participants, and a majority of those would be forces afloat," he said, declining to elaborate. Pentagon spokesman Lt. Col. Keith Schneider would not comment on the operation, other than to say he expected an announcement on it soon. The exercise was reported first in Sunday's editions of The New York Times, which said a May operation would involve 50,000 personnel. The Times said the exercise was planned as a practice run for an American response to a request from Honduras for help against an invasion by Nicaraguan troops. As part of the exercise, the United States will simulate the evacuation of the U.S. naval base at Guantanamo in Cuba, the Times said. The assumption for that part of the operation is that Cuba would retaliate for U.S. action against Nicaragua's government. The exercise would involve the Army, Marines, Navy, Air Force and Coast Guard, and will be conducted in Honduras, the Caribbean and the Camp Lejeune, N.C., Marine base, the Times said. The president, by law, can authorize units of the Coast Guard, which is part of the Transportation Department, to operate under the Navy's command
    - **Humanitarian**: intended to improve states' ability to coordinate for non-combat purposes in the future. Unlike warfighting and peacekeeping, these "exercises" may involve actual activities, such as provision of medical aid.
        - Example: About 2,000 American and Filipino troops have started annual joint exercises north of here despite the rejection of a military base treaty between the two countries, officials said Monday. The month-long Balikatan (Shoulder-to-Shoulder) exercise began November 14 and has concentrated on helping victims of last June's Mount Pinatubo volcanic eruption near Clark Air Base and Subic Naval Base, they added. Unlike past stagings of the exercise, there were no troop landings and only small field exercises as most participants took part in construction, medical missions and other civic-military projects in Pampanga, Tarlac and Zambales provinces. "I am confident this exercise will continue because

this is part of the mutual defense treaty," Philippine armed forces chief General Lisandro Abadia told a news conference formally launching Balikatan 1991. "Withdrawal (of U.S. bases) does not affect Balikatan," he said. The two allies have a Mutual Defense Treaty signed in 1951 which stipulates that each must come to the other's aid in case of attack by a third country. The Philippine senate in September rejected a new 10-year military base treaty extending the U.S. lease on Subic. Clark was turned over to Philippine control last week after the United States decided to abandon when it was devastated by the Pinatubo eruption, and informal talks on a three-year pullout from Subic are underway. Subic commander Rear Admiral Thomas Mercer said the 1,000 U.S. troops sent to this year's exercise were busy drilling wells, building multi-purpose halls and conducting medical operations among Pinatubo victims

- **Peacekeeping**: intended to improve states' ability to jointly monitor or enforce peace in a zone with an ongoing or recent conflict. This includes related peacekeeping activities such as the establishment and security of refugee camps.
  - Example: the u.s. and russia today began in central-southern russia an unprecedented joint military exercise intended to coordinate their ground forces for joint peacekeeping missions in regions of conflict. the eight-day exercise, code-named "peace-keepers --94," marks the first ever military exercise undertaken jointly by the u.s. and russia, and is being held at the totski army training base in the region of orenburg, a remote area some 1,500 kilometers east of moscow. the exercise was originally scheduled for earlier this year, but was put off due to opposition in the russian parliament. the purpose of the exercise is to enable u.s. and russian ground forces to launch joint operations in regions of conflict in response to requests from the u.n. the main task of the exercise is to establish refugee camps, transport supplies and carry out patrol missions in zones of conflict. because the exercise is peaceful in nature, no technical forces will be involved and no shots will be fired, according to press reports here. the u.s. forces sent to participate in the exercise include 60 humvees --all-terrain vehicles --and 17 command and communications trailers, as well as m-9 pistols and m-16 rifles carried by more than 200 soldiers drawn from the 3rd infantry division based in schweinfurt, germany. on the russian side, 247 soldiers from the 27th motorized division backed by 15 btr armored personnel carriers, 76 wheeled vehicles and 17 command trailers are taking part in the exercise. according to sources at the russian defense ministry, the exercise will be conducted in three stages, ending on september 10. u.s.defense secretary william perry and russian defense minister pavel grachev are to travel to the training base on september 6 to observe the exercise.

- *FocusDescription*
  The text in the news story indicating the exercise's focus and/or domain.

- *AdditionalParticipantInfo*
  If stories suggest that other countries not listed participated in the exercise, this field includes the story text describing those missing participants.

- *StateA*
  The full COW country name translated from description in the text. If there are deemed to be countries that participated but were not listed in the story text, then this field contains '-9' and the first participant is listed in the *StateB* field; otherwise, it contains the alphabetically first country.

- *StateB*
  The full country name, as described in the text. If *StateA* is -9, then this field contains the alphabetically first country; otherwise, it contains the second country.

Note: exercises have anywhere between two and thirty-nine participant states. Variables *StateC*, *StateD*, etc. are coded with full state names as appropriate.