Appendix: Coding for Unexpected Events, Regions, and Contiguity

As was mentioned in the main text, the descriptions and coding of the unexpected events variables need to be covered in detail, as these variables and their coding are crucial to the statistical results produced in Chapter Three. This appendix will describe the variables, discuss the rules and sources used for their coding, and describe each unexpected event in the data set.

Descriptions of the Unexpected Events Variables

Five variables indicating whether unexpected events happened during a particular war-month and the nature of those events are included in the dataset. They are UNEXP, MIL, POL, IMPMIL, and IMPPOL. UNEXP records whether an unexpected event occurred in the month in question. POL and MIL record whether the unexpected event in question was political or military in nature respectively. All three are dichotomous, zero/one variables. Additionally, all unexpected events were coded as being either political or military, thus if both POL and MIL are zero then UNEXP by definition will be zero as well. Likewise, if UNEXP is coded as a one, then either POL or MIL must be scored as a one as well. No single event was coded as being both political and military in nature. It is possible, however, for both POL and MIL to be coded as a one in the same month, as distinct unexpected political and military events do sometimes occur in the same war-month. IMPPOL and IMPMIL are ordinal variables ranging from zero to three and record the magnitude of the unexpected event that occurred in a given month. IMPPOL records the magnitude of political events while IMPMIL records the magnitude of military events. A value of three indicates an unexpected event of very great importance, while a one

indicates a relatively minor event, but one with enough importance to be recorded. A score of zero indicates that no significant unexpected event occurred in that respective category. If either IMPPOL or IMPMIL are coded a one or greater, then by definition UNEXP will be coded as a one and either POL or MIL will be coded as a one, as is appropriate.

Coding Rules

As discussed above, UNEXP, POL, and MIL are simply dichotomous variables that are directly derived from the variables IMPPOL and IMPMIL. Thus, these three variables are not coded, but are merely the result of the coding of IMPPOL and IMPMIL. As such, their values depend entirely on the coding of IMPPOL and IMPMIL.

The coding of IMPPOL and IMPMIL involved three decisions: whether an unexpected event observable by outside states occurred; whether it was political or military in nature; and how significant was it. The easiest of these three questions to answer is the second. Political events include such things as assassinations, the fall of governments, revolts, riots, large or important protests, and revolutions, while military events include the introduction of new tactics or weapons, surprising battlefield results, and mutinies that remain largely apolitical in their nature. Obviously, the line between apolitical and political mutinies is somewhat fuzzy, but it is generally discernable. Political mutinies aim at revolution, overthrowing the government, or significant political change. Obviously, political mutinies may be sparked by more mundane matters than high politics. The question is, "Do politics become the focus of the mutiny?" Military mutinies tend to focus on improving the condition of the troops or a simple unwillingness to go into combat. The mutiny in the Black Sea fleet in 1905 is a good example of a political mutiny, while the

mutiny in the French army in 1917 was basically apolitical, and therefore, would have been seen as a military event in this scheme of coding had the mutiny not been successfully kept a secret by the French. As it was kept a secret, it was not coded as an unexpected event as it was not observed by outside states. Only events which were observable by outside states, and hence revealed information to non-belligerents, were recorded.

Determining whether a significant unexpected event occurred was the most important part of the coding process. Obviously, in war and in politics, the unexpected is a daily occurrence. Many of these unexpected events, however, are trivial. An infantryman unexpectedly steps on a landmine, a sentry falls asleep at his post and is surprised, or a member of parliament votes differently than expected on a minor bill that has no effect on the standing of the government. These are not the sort of events that are recorded in IMPPOL and IMPMIL. They record nontrivial unexpected events. It is also important to remember that not all significant events are recorded. Only significant events that were surprises at the time are recorded. This question was always approached from the perspective of a contemporary statesman whose country was not involved in the war. For example, for the Franco-Prussian War, the coder would determine whether the events in the war would have surprised the British, the Italians, and so forth at that time. The initial outbreak of war is never coded as a surprise, though later interventions are coded as surprises when appropriate. This is because the study is not interested in why states initially join wars; thus whether the initial outbreak was a surprise or not is irrelevant.

Later unexpected events, including an unanticipated entry of a non-belligerent, were relevant to the study.

Determining the magnitude of an unexpected event, if one occurred, was the most difficult part of the coding. Level three unexpected events are very decisive military results, unexpected revolutions, or radical changes in the direction of a government. Military results on the level of a three are battles which result in the surprising destruction of large portions of an army or fleet. Such victories do not have to knock a country out of a war, but they do have to result in serious damage to one side's capabilities, not just a retreat. Of course, just because a major crushing victory happens does not necessarily mean that it was an unexpected event. If such a large victory was anticipated, then it would not be an unexpected event at all and thus a zero would be recorded. The dramatic and surprising use of new and decisive weapons, such as the atomic bomb, also falls into this category. Clearly such events rarely occur, as events of this magnitude and decisiveness are rare on their own, and it is even rarer for them to be unanticipated.

Events that rate a one on the scale would be such things as a somewhat better or worse military showing than was expected by one side in a battle or series of battles fought over a short time span, small but surprising improvements in tactics or weapons, small scale protests, or an assassination or unexpected death of a leader that did not greatly alter the nature or expected actions of a government. Also, a state may do better in battle than expected, without necessarily winning. The state may have been expected to fight poorly, but in the event actually performed decently, despite still losing. An event of this level

could also be a state winning more easily than was expected. An example would be a state being able to quickly defeat an opponent when most expected it to take longer.

Events on the level of a two are in between. Such events would be very significant battlefield surprises, though in such instances the defeated side would be able to retreat in relatively good order. They might also include unanticipated widespread protests or rioting against a government, but not of a scale that threatens to cause a revolution. It would also include the surprising fall of a government in a parliamentary system provided that it led to a significant change in policy. Without a significant change in policy, the event would be coded as a one. Obviously, some events are more surprising than others and part of this surprise comes not only from the magnitude of the event, but its degree of unexpectedness. This fact, the level of unexpectedness, also influenced the coding of IMPPOL and IMPMIL, though only to a limited extent.

The following procedure is used if two or more unexpected events occurred in the same month. As political and military events were coded separately, if one political and one military event occurred in the same month, both are recorded per the standard coding rules. If multiple unexpected events of the same type occurred in the same month—in other words, two or more political or two or more military events—the unexpected event with the greatest magnitude for its type is recorded. The events were not added together or otherwise aggregated.

One of the greatest coding difficulties is determining when an event ceased to be unexpected. Sometimes a series of events happen, such as long running demonstrations, which were initially unexpected, but over the course of time, became expected.

Determining when they cease to be unexpected is difficult, but not impossible. Obviously, the onset of the event is coded as being unexpected. Any surprising changes in the level of intensity of the event are also recorded as unexpected. If the event was expected to stop, its continuation is coded as unexpected, but if it was expected to continue, then its continuation is not coded as unexpected.

Another challenge in coding unexpected events was the problem of hindsight. Hindsight is generally an advantage, but when determining whether something was unexpected, it is a decided disadvantage. Events that appear inevitable now, may have been largely or even completely unforeseen at the time. For this reason, the coding relied mainly on contemporary accounts. The *Annual Register* was the main source for the coding.[1] The *Register* is an annual compilation of year-end reports of events for each state in the world, often written by journalists or other in country observers. It is an excellent source and can generally be relied on, but it does have several weaknesses. First, the style of the writing in the *Register* does change over time as its contributors change. This is a minor problem, but still needed to be considered. Second, prior to the 20th century, the *Register* is quite Eurocentric, but as most of the interstate wars in the Correlates of War database in the 19th century involve at least one European power or the United States, this is not as serious of a drawback as it would first seem. Though its focus in this period is Eurocentric, it does cover many of the major non-European states such as the US, China and Japan. Still, it

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[1] I am indebted to Charles Tilly for suggesting the *Annual Register*. I am also grateful to Ivan Savic who helped establish clear coding guidelines and aided with some of the more difficult coding. The final judgment was mine and any errors are my own.

covers European events in more detail. This makes it tempting to overcode the number of unexpected events in European conflicts, relative to in other conflicts. COW can also be criticized for being Eurocentric, but that is a larger debate that this work does not seek to resolve. Another weakness of the *Register* is that it does, at times, have a British bias. This bias, however, is never overwhelming, though it is quite strong in the coverage of the Crimean War. Additionally, as the bias is consistently from a British perspective and generally mild, yet overt, it was not too difficult to manage and effectively control for the bias in the coding.

The final and main area of weakness in the *Annual Register* in this regard is its scanty coverage of Latin America in the 19th and early 20th centuries. This gap was filled by *Latin America's Wars* by Robert Scheina. Though not a contemporary source like the *Register*, it was the best source available in English. Other smaller wars also received limited coverage in the *Register*. The coding of these wars relied in large part on additional supplementary texts. They were as follows:

- *War in Uganda: The Legacy of Idi Amin*, by Tony Avirgan and Martha Honey (1982)
- *The Israeli-Egyptian War of Attrition*, by Yaacov Bar-Siman-Tov (1980)
- *Australia's War*, by Joan Beaumont (1996)
- *By Reason or Force: Chile and the Balancing of Power in South America, 1830-1905*, by Robert Burr (1980)

– Italo-Turkish Diplomacy and the War over Libya, 1911-1912, by Timothy Childs (1990)

– *The Anatomy of a Small War: The Soviet-Japanese Struggle for Changkufeng/Khasan*, by Alvin Coox (1977)

– *The Third Indochina War*, by Jaap Van Ginneken (1983)

– *Strategy*, by B. H. Liddell Hart (1991)

– *The Soviet Union and the Threat from the East*, by Jonathan Haslam (1992)

– *Chronology: New Zealand in the war, 1939-1946*, by Robin Kay (1968)

– *Turkish Diplomacy, 1918-1923*, by Salahi Sonyel (1975)

Thus, though the coding involved difficult decisions, a clear set of coding rules was followed. A description of the decision has been recorded allowing outside scholars to easily examine the coding. Thus, there are several checks to help assure that the coding was unbiased and fair. Obviously, no two people would code all events the same, but the process was done as objectively as possible. The coding rules discussed above are summarized as follows:

1. Did an unexpected event other than the outbreak of war occur? If no, code all variables as a zero and move to the next month. If yes, code UNEXP as a one and proceed to step two.

2. Was it political or military in nature? If it was political in nature code POL as a one. If it was military in nature code MIL as a one. All events are either military or political events and no event is both political and military in nature, however, multiple events can occur in the same month, thus it is possible to have both military and political events in the same month. Go to step three.

3. Determine the magnitude of the unexpected event. Small events are a one, medium events a two, and very important events a three. If the event in question was political in nature, record the magnitude under IMPPOL. If it was military in nature, record the magnitude under IMPMIL.

The results of the coding are listed in Table 9.1 below. For every unexpected event recorded, a short description of the event is included as well. Only months in which an unexpected event was record are included. Wars in which no event was recorded are omitted entirely.