Definitions of Destabilizing Events in SPEED

August 2010

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ABSTRACT

This document is designed to provide operators of the EXTRACT suite of programs with an accessible guide to the definition and meaning of events intended to be captured in the Societal Stability Protocol with the Social, Political and Economic Event Database (SPEED) project. It is a companion document to "The SPEED Project's Societal Stability Protocol: An Introduction for Operators of the EXTRACT Suite of Programs." Creating an archive of reliable event data using a large number of operators over an extended period of time requires that operators employ shared meanings of the events. This document is intended to provide the basis for that shared meaning.
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Definitions of Destabilizing Events in SPEED

Introduction

This document is designed to provide operators of the EXTRACT suite of programs with an accessible guide to the definition and meaning of events intended to be captured in the Societal Stability Protocol with the Social, Political and Economic Event Database (SPEED) project. It is a companion document to “The SPEED Project’s Societal Stability Protocol: An Introduction for Operators of the EXTRACT Suite of Programs.” Creating an archive of reliable event data using a large number of operators over an extended period of time requires that operators employ shared meanings of the events. This document is intended to provide the basis for that shared meaning.

The Societal Stability Protocol is one of nearly a score of separate protocols in SPEED. Because societal stability is generally connoted by a lack of disturbing occurrences, the Societal Stability Protocol is concerned with destabilizing events. The SPEED project defines destabilizing events as “happenings that unsettle the routines and expectations of citizens, cause them to be fearful, and raise their anxiety about the future.” The disruptive effects of these mindsets undermine the processes and actions that are essential for societal development to proceed in an orderly and cumulative fashion. The type of events that can generate these mindsets include: (1) relatively rare, high-profile happenings (a coup, an assassination, an insurgency, etc.); and (2) more routine, small-bore events (political demonstrations, forced resignations, armed attack, harassment, etc.).

Reviews of prior research and extensive pretesting led to the creation of a hierarchical domain ontology for destabilizing events. There are six basic, or Tier 1, event categories within this ontology: Political Expression Events, Politically Motivated Attacks, Destabilizing State Acts, Political Power Reconfigurations, Movements of People, and Cataclysmic Events. The next section provides succinct definitions of these Tier 1 event types. The second section develops definitions and explains why each event type is viewed as an instability indicator. These abstract discussions are then elaborated upon by: (1) introducing concrete subcategories within each event type (i.e., Tier 2 and Tier 3 categories), and (2) providing hypothetical illustrations of the types of happenings that would fall within each of these more refined categories. The final section summarizes the basic differences among the Tier 1 categories (i.e., specifies the event boundaries within the ontology). Figure A-I in Appendix I outlines the hierarchical ontology of event types.
Definitions of Destabilizing Events within SPEED

**Political Expression Events**
Political expression events are the public articulation, by non-governmental actors, of threatening or unwelcome political messages.

**PoliticallyMotivated Attacks**
Politically motivated attacks are physical acts, perpetrated by humans for political reasons, which are intended to damage the person or property of others.

**Destabilizing State Acts**
Destabilizing state acts are extraordinary acts of government or ordinary acts performed with malfeasance – including the failure to perform routine duties.

**Political Power Reconfigurations**
Political power reconfigurations are changes in upper-echelon governmental officials and constitutions at the national-level.

**Mass Movements of People**
Movements of people are relocations of humans (refugees, internally displace persons, etc).

**Cataclysmic Events**
Cataclysmic events are calamitous happenings caused by natural forces (wind, water, lightening, tectonic movements, heat, etc.), human error, or some combination of both.

Key Attributes of Event Types and Distinctions

**Political Expression Events**
*Political expression events are the public articulation, by non-governmental actors, of threatening or unwelcome political messages.*

Embedded in this definition are four criteria that must be met before a happening can be properly categorized as a political expression event. Some are straightforward, others are more challenging to implement. The first criterion is that the event must involve a *public articulation.* Private thoughts, no matter how disturbing, do not meet this criterion; until they are articulated they cannot have destabilizing effects on others. The second criterion is that the public articulation must convey a *political message.* Messages are expressions of such things as ideas, thoughts, feelings, views, grievances, and complaints. Messages can be publicly articulated though spoken or written words, or by symbolic actions. To be included within this event category the messages articulated must address political matters; if they do not address political matters then they are not *political* expressions. Political matters, however, are defined broadly; in addition to the conduct of public affairs, they include messages about the make-up of the social system, the structure and operation of the economic system, and cultural mores that bear on how individuals live...
their lives (religion, family life, community life, sexual mores, etc.). The third criterion is that the conveyer of the message must be a non-governmental actor. Destabilizing messages by governmental actors acting in their official capacity fall within the “Destabilizing State Act” category.” Messages conveyed by government officials acting in their capacity as private citizens qualify as political expression events – as long as they meet all of the other criteria. The fourth criterion is that the political messages that are articulated must threatening or unwelcome. More specifically, these messages must be threatening to societal elites and/or prevailing societal equilibria – or at least unwelcome to elites or those with a vested interest in those equilibria.

The last criterion is perhaps the most challenging to implement, but it is central to the proper categorization of political expression events. If political messages are not threatening or unwelcome they do not have the potential to have destabilizing effects. The key to implementing this criterion properly lies in understanding the role of societal elites and equilibria within societies, the relationship between political expression events and changes in social equilibria, and the implications of this relationship for our understanding of societal instability. Each is addressed in turn.

Societies are composed of a complex network of equilibria that reflect prevailing behavioral norms and practices. These equilibria exist in every sector of society (social, economic, political, cultural, etc.). Without them societies could not function smoothly and efficiently; they define acceptable patterns of individual behavior and provide the basis for such things as social interactions and the socialization of youth. As important as these equilibria are for the functioning of society, there is seldom (if ever) only one way to structure them. Rather, there are usually a variety of equilibria that can provide the basis for a smoothly functioning society. Different equilibria reflect different choices, involve trade-offs, and have different societal consequences. The equilibria that prevail in a given society normally reflect the prevailing power constellations (economic power, social status, voting power, military prowess, personal contacts, etc.) in that sector of society at a point in time. Moreover, more often that not, these equilibria reflect the views and interests of the societal elites who shape them. This notwithstanding, these equilibria change over time and change is often essential for a society’s progress and even survival.

The pressure for change can come from such things as technological developments, the diffusion of new ideas, the emergence of new social groups, and international challenges. Changes in societal equilibria can happen in a variety of ways; it can be incremental, revolutionary, consensual, conflictual, violent, peaceful, etc. But these changes seldom happen easily. Even in “healthy” societies (i.e., those with effective mechanisms for the articulation of demands and the resolution of conflicts) changes in societal equilibria are difficult. One reason that change is difficult is that powerful segments of society have vested interests that in maintaining the status quo. Also important is that even those whose interests are not reflected in those equilibria have internalized the norms and values embodied in them, have made behavioral adjustment to comply with them, and are often resistant to changes in them. Thus, the burden on those advocating change is heavy.
Compounding the burdens shouldered by those advocating change is that advocates for change often have meager resources with which to generate change. It is often the young and the dispossessed that most feel the need for change, often because they are the ones who are least likely to have played a role in shaping prevailing norms and practices. One resource they do have, however, is the ability to articulate their discontent in public arenas. Indeed, it is often the only currency they have with which to initiate non-violent efforts to secure changes in the status quo. Underscoring this point is the fact that public articulation of discontents is seldom the vehicle of choice for powerful societal elites who want to secure changes in the status quo. They have other resources to translate their concerns into changes in the status quo.

This contrast underscores the centrality of the threatening or unwelcome message criterion for political expression events. If the public articulation of a political message is not threatening, or at least unwelcome, to societal elites and equilibria, then it is not likely to have destabilizing effects. If, however, the message is threatening or unwelcome, then it is a reflection of unhappiness with the status quo. To the extent that this discontent is shared by a large segment of society, the public expressions of it are likely to generate pressures for what may be destabilizing changes. If non-violent efforts to secure change are thwarted, violent efforts to secure change may emerge – which are even more destabilizing. Thus, within the paradigm that structures the Societal Stability Protocol, political expressions are viewed as quintessential precursor events. They function like the canary in the mine and their importance for understanding societal stability derives principally from the message they convey and what that message portends for the future.

Figure 1 outlines the key components of a political expression event.

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**Figure 1**

*Four Criteria for Political Expression Events*
Types of Political Expression Events: the Mode of Expression

There are a variety of modes of expression that can be used to articulate threatening or unwelcome political messages. These constitute the basis for the Tier 2 and Tier 3 categorizations of political expression events within the Societal Stability Protocol. Differences in these modes of expression can affect the impact of the message. Also, understanding the different modes of expression can contribute to an understanding of the type of events included in this category and enhance the reliable detection of them. There are eleven different modes of expression. These include: (1) verbal statements (speeches, interviews, announcements, press releases); (2) broadcasts (political commentaries, political satire, news conferences); (3) movies, documentaries, plays, etc. (movies about socially taboo topics, plays that mock the nation’s rulers, performances that indict the nation’s morality); (4) signs (placards, billboards, political cartoons); (5) written statements (books, pamphlets, letters to parishioners or supporters, editorials); (6) digital transmissions (e-mails, website postings); (7) mass demonstrations (rallies, marches, protests); (8) job actions (strikes, pickets); (9) association creations (political party, gay rights association, protest group); and (10) symbolic expressions (sit-in, self-imposed exile, self-inflicted injury). These Tier 2 categories are reported below along with the Tier 3 categorizations, where relevant.

- Verbal Statements
- Broadcasts
  - Radio
  - Shortwave
  - Television
  - Webcast
- Movies, Documentaries, Plays, etc.
- Signs
- Writings
  - Editorial
  - Article
  - Letter
  - Book
  - Press release
  - Pamphlet
  - Cartoon/drawing
- Digital Transmissions
- Mass Demonstrations
- Job Actions
- Creating an Association
- Symbolic Expressions
  - Passive resistance
  - Praying
  - Boycott
  - Blocking Traffic, Egress, Regress
  - Withholding Something due Another
  - Disrespecting National Symbols
Examples of Political Expression Events, by Subcategory
The following are examples of the type of events that fall within each of the categories listed above:

Verbal Statement
- The director of Amnesty International today criticized the conduct of the US military for inflicting civilian casualties in Afghanistan at a press conference.
- The noted civil rights leader addressed a large crowd outside court building today and criticized the judiciary’s discriminatory practices.

Broadcasted Statement
- Spokeswomen for NOW appeared on television today chastising Congress for its hesitation in passing the Equal Rights Act.
- In his weekly radio address on Saturday, the religious leaders railed against society’s complacent attitude toward the declining morals of children.

Movie, Play, Documentary
- A shocking movie premiered today in Kabul about the plight of women.
- A play opened yesterday in Tehran that severely mocked religious leaders, who were thinly guised as characters.

Writings
- A citizen’s group handed out pamphlets today calling for expansion of political freedoms and chastising the Chinese government’s practices.
- The Vatican released today a written statement to be read at all masses demanding that parishioners vote against politicians who support abortion.
- The book published last week revealed intimate details about the junta’s illicit dealings with the multi-national corporations.

Sign/banner
- Members of PETA showed up at yesterday’s designer's show carrying a large banner which read, "I'd rather go naked than wear fur."
- Protesters placed inflammatory posters in the square yesterday criticizing the government dealings with contractors who were ravaging the rain forests.
- Protesters wrote anti-government slogans on the sidewalk this morning.
- A cartoon mocking the Prophet Mohammed appeared in yesterday’s Danish Times generating protests and death threats.
Digital Transmission

- The day before the upcoming WTO meeting, organizers sent out an email criticizing the government’s trade policies and announcing a mass protest.
- The rebel group launched a website yesterday to disseminate anti-government propaganda and details of a demonstration to be held tomorrow.

Mass Demonstration

- Students gathered in the quad this morning to protest the Vietnam War.
- 200 protesters gathered outside the capital building yesterday to voice opposition to the legislation on the immigration ban.
- About 5,000 laborers demonstrated today against the increasing cost of living and called for a Cabinet shuffle.

Job Action

- Local miners went on strike in protest against unsafe working conditions.
- Workers picket the hotel to protest the cut in benefits.

Forming an Association/movement

- In the wake of beating of Rodney King, last week the residents of a South Central neighborhood formed the Neighbors against Police Brutality.
- Leftist dissidents create pro-communist group, Workers Unification Front, to push for government reform.

Symbolic Act

- Black students at “Ole Miss” staged a sit in yesterday at a local restaurant to protest Jim Crow laws.
- Twelve Buddhist monks set themselves on fire yesterday to protest the government's restriction on religious expression.
- In a well-organized effort, Tibetans today refused to engage in their traditional Losar celebration (the Tibetan New Year) to protest Chinese repression.
- At today’s news conference a reporter threw rotten tomatoes at the president.
- Anti-abortion activists gathered this morning to pray for those who opposed their views.
- A man was arrested today for having a fake bomb strapped to his waist.
Politically Motivated Attacks

*Politically motivated attacks are physical acts, perpetrated by humans for political reasons, which are intended to damage the person or property of others.*

This definition contains four criteria that must be met before a happening can be properly categorized as a politically motivated attack.\(^1\) First, there must be a *physical act* involved (e.g., firing a weapon, hurling a rock, initiating an internet virus, setting a fire, etc.) that is capable of doing harm to people or property. Second, the physical act(s) must be *perpetrated by humans* (as opposed to natural forces). Third, the human initiators must *intend for their act to inflict damage on the person or property of others*. Harmful physical acts that are the result of simple carelessness or negligence (a gun that fired while being cleaned that wounded a government leader) would not meet this criterion. Nor do acts intended to cause *only* self-inflicted harm; suicide attackers, of course, intend to inflict harm on both themselves and others. The fourth criterion is that the initiator must have *political reasons* for initiating the act.

As was the case with political expression events, the “political” criterion embedded in this definition is defined broadly. Political reasons would include such things as attackers driven by hatred toward different social groups (racial, nationality, religious, etc.) or the desire for revenge for prior harms caused by members of those groups. It would also include those motivated by the desire to change or control the government, destroy an economic system, further (or oppose) a political ideology, create a social revolution, advance a social cause (right to life, apartheid, gay rights, etc.). What this political criterion specifically excludes are garden variety criminal acts. Attackers motivated solely by personal greed, jealousy, personal acrimony, romantic love, sexual urges, or the need to feed a drug addiction would not meet the political criterion. The existence of political overtones or origins for an attack can normally be ascertained by scrutinizing the textual description, which will normally provide the basis for differentiating between ordinary criminal acts and politically motivated attacks. Where political motives exist they will be noted in the news report or evident in the description of the event (i.e., the bombing of a Shiite neighborhood by Sunni insurgents; the assassination of a political leader; a suicide attack on the barracks of an occupying force; the kidnapping of citizens of a hostile nation, the raping of Tutsi women and girls, etc.). News accounts of murders committed in the course of a robbery, kidnappings for personal profit, rape, juvenile vandalism, etc. are usually quite distinct from those of politically motivated attacks.

It should be emphasized that *ordinary acts of interstate wars should not be categorized as politically motivated attacks.* The reason for this is that the Societal Stability Protocol is concerned with intra-national affairs; international matters are relevant only when they bear on domestic matters (i.e., international assistance to

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\(^1\) Unrealized political attacks involve unsuccessful efforts to damage the person or property of others for political reasons (e.g., would-be political assassins whose conspiracy was detected by the police, suicide bombers whose efforts to detonate her device was thwarted by bystanders who noticed her anxious behavior, etc.).
insurgents or terrorists, attacks on international businesses, etc.). Ordinary acts of war are of a different genre than the politically motivated attacks described above (i.e., they are formal state actions, driven by strategic considerations, carried out by orders that are accompanied by severe penalties for disobeying, etc.). Ordinary acts of war require a very different analytic approach and have been studied extensively in other research projects. It should be emphasized that atrocities committed by foreign soldiers against non-combatants qualify as politically motivated attacks.

Politically motivated attacks are considered destabilizing events because, in addition to inflicting physical harm, they can have deleterious effects on both the psyches of citizens and fundamental societal processes. Personal safety is a fundamental human concern that is a significant driver of human behavior and government policy. Campaigns of political terror can preoccupy governments as well as other societal actors, to the detriment of other concerns (economic development, infrastructure, social policy, etc.). Isolated acts of politically motivated violence can also have disruptive effects.

Figure 2 outlines the key components of a politically motivated attack.

**Figure 2**

Four Criteria for Politically Motivated Acts

- Physical Acts Capable of Doing Harm
- Political Motivation
- Intent to Inflict Damage on Others or Their Property
- Human Initiator

**Types of Politically Motivated Attacks**
The Societal Stability Protocol employs a typology of politically motivated attacks that is intended to help in the identification of these happenings. The Tier 2 and Tier 3 categories of politically motivated attacks are as follows:

- Spontaneous Mass Attacks
  - Riots
  - Brawls
- Extraordinary Attacks
o Assassinations
  o Suicides
  o Kidnappings/hostage takings
  o Executions
• Other Politically Motivated Attacks
  o Other politically motivated attacks on humans
  o Other politically motivated attacks on property
• Organized Mass Attacks
  o Border incident
  o Siege/ Blockade
• Unrealized Attacks
  o Attempt
  o Conspiracy

“Spontaneous Mass Attacks” involve situations in which social sparks ignite particularly tense or incendiary situations. For example, a race riot may be ignited by a police shooting in a ghetto teeming with unemployed or underemployed residents. A food riot may result when the government reduces food subsidies. A brawl among teenagers may be the result of insulting remarks made across class, religious or racial lines.

“Extraordinary Attacks” include an egregious subset of attacks that are particularly disruptive to societies. Assassinations of leaders, suicide attacks, kidnappings and executions are particularly noteworthy here. SPEED defines assassinations as targeted murders of public figures; they are usually labeled as assassinations in news reports. An accidental death of a president would not be an assassination as it is not “targeted.” A mob “hit” of a drug competitor would not be an assassination because the drug competitor is not a public figure. Suicide attacks are defined as those in which the death of the assailant is an integral part of the attack plan. Thus, an attacker whose bomb accidentally explodes in route to planting it would not qualify as a suicide attack. Suicide attacks are frequently labeled as such in news account; they are important to isolate for a number of reasons. Suicide attacks underscore the commitment of the perpetrator to a political cause in ways that distinguish them from other attacks. Also, suicide attacks are particularly destabilizing because they are difficult to prevent and underscore the vulnerability of ordinary citizens. While assassinations target prominent individuals, suicide attacks can affect anyone. Moreover, they often inflict collateral damage that can affect individuals and the property of those in population groups that are not targeted (tourists shopping at a bazaar in a Sunni locale).

Kidnappings and hostage-takings are noteworthy for some of the same reasons that distinguish suicide attacks. They induce a sense of vulnerability among ordinary citizens because anyone can be a victim. In addition, kidnappings and hostage-takings frequently linger for an extended period of time and are covered extensively in the news, thereby generating sustained uncertainty and anxiety. Executions involve methodical and deliberate murders. Thus, they differ considerably from murders involving the explosion of a bomb in the lobby of an office building. What sets executions apart from other
murders is the ritualistic nature of the killing – which can have chilling effects. Events should not be categorized as executions without clear textual justification.

Most of the politically motivated attacks encountered in news reports will fall in the category labeled “Other Politically Motivated Attacks” This is a residual category in that it includes politically motivated attacks that do not fall within any of the other categories included in the list set displayed above. It includes both attacks against persons and property. One gray area that should be mentioned here concerns attacks perpetrated by organized crime, gangs, drug cartels, and the like. Often attacks perpetrated by such groups fall do not qualify as “politically motivated.” However, there are periods of time in certain locales when these actors purposively create a reign of terror intended to intimidate both citizens and officials in ways that allow them to operate with impunity (e.g., narcoterrorism). As such, their actions can be viewed as destabilizing and they should be captured here. The decision to include such event must be made solely from information contained in the news account; personal knowledge should not be used.

“Organized Mass Attacks” include events involving border attacks, sieges and blockades. These are exceptionally rare events that normally involve military forces; occasionally, however, they will involve police forces or even rebel forces.

“Unrealized Attacks” are attacks that, for one reason or another, are never executed. This notwithstanding, the fact that they were contemplated can have destabilizing effects. Attempts are attacks that were thwarted at the execution stage. Thus, they include events in which the bomb did not explode when ignited; security officials discovered the attacker before he shot the target; passers-by disarmed the attacker before she did any damage, etc. In contrast, a conspiracy involves an unrealized attack that was disrupted in the planning stage (i.e., before the execution stage). For example, intercepted messages, informants, or wiretaps may have revealed the existence of a plot, resulting in the arrest of the conspirators well before the event was to take place. It should be stressed that the unrealized attack categories (i.e., attempts, conspiracies) should only be used in conjunction with another category of attack. That is, operators would not indicate that an event was an “attempt” without also indicating what was attempted (i.e., a kidnapping, a suicide attack, an assassination, etc.).

**Examples of Politically Motivated Attacks, by Subcategory**
The following are examples of the type of events that fall within each event category:

*Spontaneous Mass Attacks*

**Riot**
- Riots broke out in Tehran to today protest the reduction in government food subsidies; dozens were injured.
- Tuesday’s killing of the popular religious leader resulted in 2 days of rioting by followers.
Brawl

- Efforts by an angry group of men to drive a group of women from a Tehran bar last night resulted in vicious fighting as their escorts protested.
- Hecklers met this morning’s funeral procession, leading to violent confrontations between a dozen Catholics and Protestants in Belfast.

Extraordinary Attacks

Assassination

- Prime Minister Bhutto of Pakistan was shot and killed today at a campaign rally.
- Assassins on motorcycles opened fire on the official motorcade yesterday, killing the prime minister and 2 security guards.
- Martin Luther King was shot on the balcony in his hotel on Thursday.
- The fiery Protestant minister was hunted down and shot by IRA members late last night.
- The Turkish consul was assassinated yesterday at a stoplight by Armenian terrorists who waived the Armenian flag as they sped away.

Suicide Attack

- A young woman with a bomb strapped to her body detonated it in front of the American embassy today.
- A Sunni attacker detonated a bomb in a Shiite bazaar killing himself and 20 shoppers this morning.

Kidnapping/hostage-taking

- Three American diplomats were taken hostage today by an extremist group demanding the removal of troops from Iraq.
- Iranian fundamentalists shouting anti-American slogans overtook the U.S. embassy yesterday and are holding hostage a number of U.S. citizens.

Execution

- The bodies of a dozen townsmen were found dead yesterday in a shallow trench with their hands tied and with bullet holes in their head.
- The body of the dead hostage was thrown from the plane after their demands were not met at noon today.

Other Politically Motivated Attacks

Other Attacks on Humans

- A British minister was heckled and assaulted by Irish protestors as he left a peace brokering meeting on Tuesday.
- Two Ku Klux Klan members were arrested yesterday after physically attacking a legislator who had just introduced a civil rights bill.
Christian Lebanese militiamen opened fire on Palestinian refugees in the camps of Salira and Sliatila yesterday.

Drones were launched at Taliban leaders last night, killing six and damaging their houses.

Other Attacks on Property

Early this morning striking mine workers, upset at the impasse in the negotiations, threw bottles and rocks at the company’s headquarters.

Angry mobs hurled stones and flaming objects at U.S. embassy today after last night’s air attack caused civilian casualties.

Students trashed a student placement office at Columbia this morning after their efforts to block military recruiting at the school failed.

Organized Mass Attacks

Border Incidents

Pakistani and Indian troops exchanged gunfire across the disputed Kashmir border early this morning.

Yesterday Iran’s military fired on an Iraqi helicopter that allegedly crossed into Iranian airspace near the border.

U.S. troops chased the Afghan Taliban into Pakistan yesterday, killing dozens.

Military Siege/blockade

Chechen independence fighters blocked roads yesterday to prevent the movement of troops into the regions.

The U.S. Navy implemented the blockade against Cuba this morning.

The Sri Lankan army pushed the Tamil Tigers into a corner of the island last week and has been bombarding them relentlessly.

Government troops staged a siege around Budapest, cutting off vital supplies.

Unrealized Attacks

Attempted Attack

An unexploded bomb was found yesterday in a New York subway station near the World Trade Center; authorities linked it to a terrorist cell.

President Reagan was wounded from gunshots received yesterday in an assassination attempt.

The assassin’s bullet missed the president but shot his top aide, who died this morning.

Conspiracy to Attack

Five Saudi Arabians suspected of terrorist involvement confessed today to a planned attack on the World Trade Center that was scheduled for next week.
• Iraqi agents uncovered a plot yesterday to detonate explosives in the Shiite neighborhood; the plotters were arrested this morning.

Destabilizing State Acts

Destabilizing state acts are extraordinary acts of government or ordinary acts performed with malfeasance – including the failure to perform routine duties.

There are three criteria implicit in this definition that must be met before a happening can be properly categorized as a destabilizing state act. The first criterion is that the initiator of the event be a government agent. Government agents can be individuals or corporate bodies (legislatures, courts, the executive branch, etc.). The initiator can be an agent of the national, provincial/state, or local government. The second criterion is that the governmental actor must be acting within his/her/its official capacity. A legislator who organizes a rally opposing a war is acting in her capacity as a private citizen; if she initiates legislation to end funding for the war she is acting in her official capacity. A police officer who batters ethnic minorities while assigned to contain a riot is acting in his capacity as a state agent; one who batters minorities while he is off-duty is not. The third criterion is that the actions initiated must be either: (1) an extraordinary act of government or (2) an ordinary state act performed with malfeasance. Extraordinary acts of government are actions that are inherently disruptive to the smooth functioning of basic societal processes and the conduct of normal human interactions. Ordinary acts of government performed with malfeasance are routine state tasks (regulatory functions, public safety matters, dispute resolution, etc.) that state actors perform in ways that violate their fiduciary obligations to the public (i.e., they violate the trust citizens place in them as public officials). Thus, it is not the inherent nature of these acts that makes them destabilizing, but how they are executed.

Actions that meet the “extraordinary act of government” criterion are considered to be inherently disruptive because they create uncertainty concerning the “rules of the game” that citizens use to conduct their daily lives. Since the emergence of the state as an independent actor, common understandings have emerged about the boundaries between public and private spheres of action; in many instances basic civil and political rights have been created that formalize these boundaries. These common understandings and legal rights differ across countries. This notwithstanding, at a given point in time these prevailing understandings and rights define the rules of the game within a particular locale. Citizens rely on these conventions to guide their conduct and make decisions about the future. State acts that are inconsistent with common understandings concerning appropriate behavior by public officials and contravene basic civil and political rights create uncertainty about how citizens should conduct their lives and what the future holds. This can create anxiety and lead to behavior patterns that are counterproductive or at least inefficient. These deleterious effects can occur even when extraordinary state actions (curfews, censorship, banning associations) are only targeted at segments of a population. While this can incite anger within that community, it can also lead to anxiety throughout a society. Boundary violations by a societal actor as powerful as the state have widespread effects because they create uncertainty over whether new rules of the game are emerging that will affect everyone. This, in turn, can undermine the smooth
functioning of basic social, economic, and political processes, which can reverberate throughout a society for an extended period of time.

Actions that meet the “ordinary acts with malfeasance” criterion are considered destabilizing because they undermine public trust in state actors. Public officials are: (1) entrusted with responsibilities that are important to the lives of citizens; and (2) given a set of powers and resources to perform those responsibilities. When public officials violate their fiduciary obligations that compact is violated; violations occur when the performance of routine public duties are not conducted in an even-handed, good-faith manner that inspires trust on the part of the citizenry. Malfeasance goes beyond simple incompetence, negligence, or even personal greed; it requires an element of favoritism, vindictiveness, disdain, or some other abuse of discretion that suggests that the act is not a good-faith execution of state power. These violations of the public trust undermine confidence in those charged with the performance of public duties and create uncertainty over the criteria that are being used to exercise governmental power. This introduces anxiety and resentment in those who rely on the public services or who are vulnerable to state power. It leads others to find alternative means of securing their needs, which can generate conflict and interfere with the smooth functioning of societal processes. Because this category of events includes routinely performed state tasks, it should not be used unless textual materials in the news report clearly suggest that the event is not a good-faith exercise of state power or discretion.

Figure 3 outlines the key components of a destabilizing state act.

**Figure 3**

Three Criteria for Destabilizing State Acts

Types of Events in the Destabilizing State Acts Category

The most basic criterion for including an event within the “Destabilizing State Acts” category is that its initiator must be an agent of the state, acting in their official capacity. However, there is a broad array of activities that state actors can initiate that have destabilizing effects. One subset of these activities can be initiated only by agents of the
state (declaring martial law, arresting dissidents, suspending public services, exiling opponents, etc.); another subset can be initiated by both state and non-state actors (assassinations, executing a coup d’état, causing a nuclear power plant meltdown, etc.). Because some of the activities in the second subset fall within other destabilizing event categories within the Societal Stability Protocol, not all destabilizing events initiated by state actors will fall within the “Destabilizing State Acts” category. The destabilizing events that are not within the exclusive domain of state action are captured in question sets in other event categories; these questions are not duplicated in the “Destabilizing State Acts” category. To do so would generate confusion and needless duplication. Moreover, information on “Initiator Type” allows the destabilizing events initiated by state actors, but not in the “Destabilizing State Acts” category, to be identified.

The state acts that are captured within the “Destabilizing State Acts” category can be classified within one of following Tier 2 and Tier 3 categories:

- Extraordinary Acts
- Ordinary Acts, with Malfeasance
  - Minimal Acts
  - Formal Acts
  - Coercive Acts

The Tier 3 categories for “Extraordinary Acts” include eleven options within three cognates. They are as follows:

- Censorship
- Disrupting Electronic Communications
- Banning or Suspension of Civil Society Groups

- Imposition of a Curfew
- Extraordinary Executive Decree
- Declaration of State of Emergency
- Imposition of Martial Law

- Dissolving Government
- Failure to Convene Legislature
- Cancellation/annulment of Election
- Suspension of National Constitution

The first cognate involves extraordinary governmental interferences with expressive rights and the free flow of information, which are vital to the maintenance of vibrant, open societies. Censorship involves such things as the confiscation of written materials (e.g., newspapers, books, pamphlets, etc.) or orders to withhold them; closures of communication facilities (e.g., radio/television stations, newspaper offices); and kindred activities. Disrupting electronic communications includes both jamming broadcast frequencies and shutting down the internet. The third option involves the banning of civil society groups (political parties, public interest groups, religious organizations, etc.).
Outlawing such groups is tantamount to restricting the associational freedom of citizens, which can undermine their ability to act in concert with like-minded citizens to pursue personal and social objectives within both private and public spheres of life.

The second cognate involves the use of extraordinary state powers that impinge upon the liberties and prerogatives of ordinary citizens (imposing curfews, issuing extraordinary executive decrees, declaring states of emergency, etc.). Imposing a curfew is an extreme act that can be used to isolate targeted population groups and undermine their ability to conduct routine life activities. Executive decrees can touch upon a broad array of topics (administrative personnel codes, food and drug regulations, tariff matters, etc.) and most of them are not destabilizing. However, a subset of such decrees – those that have the effects similar to imposing a state of emergency or martial law (i.e., they restrict civil and political liberties and rights) – qualify as destabilizing state acts. Imposing martial law involves the military assuming the dominant role in the performance of governmental tasks, including the maintenance of order and the administration of justice. The imposition of martial law introduces major changes in the status of legal rights and how legal disputes are processed, as well as a great deal of uncertainty among those potentially affected by the changes. The use of these various extraordinary powers is normally justified only under dire circumstances; in many cases exercising them is tantamount to suspending the rule of law. Thus, their invocation is inherently disruptive.

The third cognate involves the extraordinary use of governmental power in ways that affect the operation of other branches of government. Indirectly, of course, this affects the lives of citizens. This cognate includes dissolving the government, failing to convene the legislature, canceling or annulling elections, and suspending the constitution. Dissolving the government is disruptive because it is an impediment to the normal conduct of governmental affairs, which can generate a great deal of anxiety and uncertainty within a society. Similarly, when the constitution mandates that the executive convene the legislature at a specified time – and the executive fails to exercise that duty – it can have disruptive effects. Such an arrogance of power can lead to questions about the executive’s respect for other legal constraints on its authority. Suspending or annulling an election strikes at the core of accountability mechanisms in contemporary societies. Suspending the constitution is an even more extreme act. It is equivalent to suspending the legal constraints on government and imposing dictatorial rule. All of these actions can have disruptive societal effects, though to varying degrees.

The “Ordinary Acts, with Malfeasance” category includes three Tier 3 categories: minimal acts, formal acts, and coercive acts. The minimal acts category includes state acts that do not involve the formal use of state power. The formal category includes formal state acts that fall short of coercive acts. The last category includes events that invoke the formal use of the state’s coercive power, but fall short of violent attacks.

The “Minimal Acts” category includes seven options grouped within three cognates. The first cognate is a “latent state act” cognate. It includes the failure to discharge state responsibilities; warnings about imminent formal state actions; and threats to use
violence. The second is a “job action” cognate; it includes punitive dismissals, public employee job actions, and mutinies. The third is an “informal state action” cognate; it includes the assembly of coercive forces and the military conduct of civilian functions. These options are listed below, by cognate.

- Failure to Act
- Warning of Formal/coercive action
- Threat to Use Violence
- Punitive Discharge of Government Officials
- Job Action by Public Employees
- Mutiny
- Assembly of Police/military
- Military Conduct of Civilian Functions

Examples of the “failure to act” option include the refusal of the police to stop hecklers or protagonists from interfering with protestors; or when they fail to intervene to stop rioters from pillorying the neighborhood of a minority group. The “Failure to Act” category should only be used when it is explicitly mentioned in a news account. The “Warning” category is for statements that raise the possibility of initiating some destabilizing state act that would fall within the formal or coercive categories discussed below. This category should only be used in conjunction with one of the options listed in the formal or coercive list sets. For example, a president may warn protesters that he will invoke martial law, declare a state of emergency, arrest malcontents, close facilities, exile opponents, confiscate property, etc. unless they cease their disruptive actions. In these cases operators would select both the “warning” option in the latent state act list set and the applicable act in the formal or coercive list sets. The “threat to use violence” is for written or verbal threats by government actors to engage in acts that would be included within the “Politically Motivated Attack” category.

Governments routinely dismiss state employees for a variety of justifiable reasons. However, on rare occasions, dismissals of high-profile officials become highly publicized political matters that can have destabilizing effects. These dismissals can involve whistleblowers, officials who voice ethical objections about state policies, a general who calls into question security decisions or war strategies, employees who reveal embarrassing details about governmental incompetence, etc. Dismissals under such circumstances are punitive and can have chilling effects on other employees and destabilizing effects within society. Job actions by public employees include any type of strike, picket, work slowdown, etc. by public employees. If museum workers go on strike it may not have destabilizing effects; but if hospital workers, public safety officers, or transit workers go on strike it may cause a great deal of anxiety. The same can be said about mutinies, which are simply job actions by members of the military.

The visible assembling of police or military forces in specific areas can be intimidating even to citizens desiring to exercise legal rights and prerogatives. These assemblies can
interfere with the conduct of elections or demonstrations without a shot being fired or an arrest being made. The military conduct of police functions – patrolling streets, monitoring traffic, guarding public buildings or areas – can also have destabilizing effects. The assumption of these functions by the military sends a message to citizens that something is awry – or reflects a belief that something is about to go awry – that requires the extraordinary display of coercive force, even though that force is never used.

The “Formal Acts” category includes three options dealing with the abusive exercise of a variety of formal state powers. The options are listed below.

- Abuse of Police Powers
- Abuse of Legal Discretion
- Abuse of Judicial Discretion

The abuse of police powers involves use of routine police powers (street stops, inspections, interrogations, public health inspections, safety inspections, etc.) to harass citizens. For example, street stops become harassment when they focus on targeted populations and/or occur during periods of social tension. Inspections of businesses become harassment when they are focused on companies that feature signs supporting opposition figures, or stores owned by minority groups. Questioning suspects becomes harassment when those taken into custody happen to be dissidents, or their kin. Lawyers for the state routinely initiate tax investigations, file criminal charges, secure search warrants, and dismiss formal legal actions. The use of these legal powers becomes abusive when they are used as political weapons to punish or intimidate political opponents, dissidents, or social outcasts. Judges are charged with the impartial implementation of laws and legal rules and are vested with a wide range of powers to discharge their duties; they can dismiss suits, rule on motions, and sentence defendants. But when judges use their powers in ways that reward or punish those in public life – or their political enemies – then they have abused the authority vested in them. This becomes evident in hurried trials or abrupt dismissals that are tailored to fit electoral cycles, heavy-handed sentences given to dissidents convicted of vague offenses, or complicity with the executive branch in the handling of highly political matters.

The “Coercive Acts” category involves a set of formal state actions that involve the use of state power in ways that impinge upon the lives of citizens, but which fall short of violent acts (violent state acts would be captured in the “Politically Motivated Attacks” category). There are eight options within this category; they are organized within three cognates. They are:

- Facility Closures
- Service Suspensions
- Restricting Movements
- Forced Relocations
- Proactive Arrests/detentions
- Exile of Citizens
• Intrusion into Homes, Offices, etc
• Confiscation of Property

The first cognate deals with state actions that affect the operation of facilities and services. The inclusion of these actions within the coercive state acts category must be justified by the circumstances. Thus, the closing of a facility or the suspension of public services (rail, power, water, etc.) because of documented safety hazards would not qualify as a destabilizing act. However, the closing of a stadium where an anti-government rally was scheduled would qualify – as would the closure of bus lines headed to the stadium. Cutting off power and sanitation facilities to a settlement where unwanted refugees were locating would also qualify as a malevolent state act.

The second cognate includes a variety of actions that impinge upon the mobility of individuals. The first two options in this cognate – restricting the free movement of citizens and the forceful relocation of citizens – are relevant mainly with respect to mass gatherings of individuals (protests, marches, pickets). They capture state interference with public expressions that fall short of formal arrest or detention. However, in rare situations, governments restrict the access of international aid workers or peacekeeping troops to certain regions of a county because it may upset the government’s grip on power. Also, sometimes individuals are forcibly relocated (from the country to the city, or vice versa) to achieve policy objectives (industrialization, pacification, etc.).

The next option within this cognate – proactive arrests/detentions – is to be selected only when two conditions are met. The first is that they must be proactive; the second is that they must involve dissidents, opponents, or some other type of individual that is perceived to pose some type of political threat to the government. Proactive arrests/detentions can be best understood by contrasting them with reactive ones. A reactive arrest or detention is one that is made in direct response to a destabilizing act involving the arrestee/detainee. For example, the initiator of a politically motivated attack may be arrested during/after the attack; a group of demonstrators may be detained to suppress the protest; rioters may be arrested to quell the violence; etc. These arrests and detentions are to be captured in the section on “Post-hoc Reactions to Destabilizing Events.” Proactive arrests/detentions involve situations that are not reactions to immediate circumstances. For example, a prominent dissident may be arrested the week before a party gathering or a rally; a legal activist in China may be restricted to her house to prevent her from aiding law suits against the state; a Russian oligarch may be arrested before he can form a party to challenge the incumbent; etc. The second condition pertains to the type individual(s) who are arrested or detained. This option should not be used when the arrestee or detainee is not someone who poses a political threat or nuisance. Thus, it would never be used when the affected individual is a common criminal. The last option in this cognate involves the exile of individuals outside the country or to outlying regions within a country (i.e., Siberia). It should be used only when the person being exiled poses a political threat to the state. Exiles of criminals, spies or illegal immigrants would not meet this criterion; exiles of former political leaders or dissidents would.
The last cognate includes state infringements on the property of those who are viewed as political threats or nuisances to the state. The two options here include state trespasses on private property and the confiscation of private property. These are tactics that are routinely used in prosecuting drug crimes, income tax evasion, money laundering, etc. Thus, they should only be designated as destabilizing state acts when the circumstances or the individuals targeted suggest that they are driven by petty political motivations.

**Examples of Destabilizing State Acts, by Subcategory**

The following are examples of the type of events that fall within each of the categories listed above:

*Extraordinary State Acts*

**Censorship**
- The new Czech government today passed a law requiring government approval of all media reports on government activity.
- The government today legally enjoined the newspaper from publishing a negative editorial about its reign.
- The police were dispatched to collect copies of the newspaper this morning.
- The government yesterday refused to issue a permit for the protest march.
- France today banned the display of any religious symbols in schools.

**Disrupting Electronic Communications**
- The Chinese government suspended internet services this morning at a Beijing university to prevent students from organizing.
- State agency shut down a number of dissident websites yesterday and blocked service to the group’s IP addresses.
- Kazakhstan’s government denied the use of the Internet to dissidents seeking to form a webpage for their group.

**Banning an Organization**
- The government banned the Socialist Party from operating last week.
- On Friday legislators enacted a law that excludes the Communist Party from political participation.
- Egyptian President Nasser barred members of the Muslim Brotherhood from meeting last week.
- The minister suspended the dissident group’s license to operate as a legally registered organization on Tuesday.

**Mandating a Curfew**
- The French government issued a curfew last night for in the downtown area of Tirana.
- Local authorities declared a curfew after sectarian riots broke out yesterday.
• The President instituted a 9 p.m. curfew on all residents today after continued rioting and violence.
• The government announced a curfew on Monday, the day before the election, to demonstrate its authority.

Extraordinary Executive Decree Issued
• Hugo Chavez of Venezuela issued an executive decree today allowing him to nationalize the telecommunication industry there.
• South Korea President Chun Doo Hwan issued a presidential edict today that bans political activity by dissidents.
• On Friday the president issued an edict that suspended the rights of individuals to criticize the government.

Declaring a State of Emergency
• The authoritarian regime announced a state of emergency today to justify their repressive tactics.
• The prime minister declared a state of emergency on Wednesday in response to the flurry of terrorist attacks.
• The President declared a State of Emergency today after continued rioting and violence.

Imposition of Martial Law
• General Pinochet instituted martial law Tuesday to consolidate his grip on power.
• The President instituted martial law today, citing the continuing unrest.

Dissolving of Government
• On Friday General Pinochet dissolved the Chilean Congress as part of his governmental overhaul.
• After coalition parties failed to agree on a government by yesterday’s deadline, the president dissolved the legislature and called for new elections.
• After his successful coup attempt on Sunday, newly-ordained President Nasser dismissed the Parliament and installed a new cabinet.

Failure to Recall the Legislature
• Newspapers and citizens groups created an uproar on Monday when Canada’s prime minister failed to convene parliament as mandated.
• After successfully executing a coup in July, the junta failed to convene the fall session of Parliament, which was to start the second week in September, as prescribed in the constitution.
Cancellation/Annulment of Elections

• The recently established military government today canceled elections that were scheduled to take place next month.
• Hamas cancelled scheduled elections last week, sending a clear message to the U.S. and Europe about its grip on power.
• Mugabe annulled the election on Tuesday, after it became clear that he lost; new elections were scheduled to take place in three months.

Suspension of Constitution

• After seizing power last week, General Pinochet suspended the national constitution of Chile.
• As part of state of emergency declared yesterday, the president ordered the suspension of the habeas corpus provisions of the constitution.

Routine State Act: Minimal Failure to Act

• The police took no actions yesterday to stop Hindu mobs from plundering the Muslim neighborhood.
• Thugs beat up civil rights protestors in Birmingham today in an area cordoned off by the police, who made no effort to intervene.

Warning

• During yesterday's press conference, China threatened to prosecute dissidents in Hunan province if protests against the government did not stop.
• In a speech today, the president of Iran warned that if student activists did not cease their protests he would close the university.

Threat of Violence

• China's government yesterday threatened to shoot any political dissidents who sought to demonstrate anti-government sentiment in the public square.
• Mayor Daley issued a “shoot to kill” order this morning to Chicago police to quell anti-war disturbances around the convention.
• President Nasser threatened the use of force against political dissidents today if they decided to carry out their protest in Cairo Center.

Punitive Dismissal of Government Officials

• A Russian environmental spokesman was dismissed yesterday to clear the way for the selling of lucrative land plots now designated national reserves.
• Nationalist government today cited insubordination in firing of 8 government bureaucrats who had refused to issue the licenses to develop public lands.
• In what has been termed the “Saturday Night Massacre” President Nixon yesterday fired a series of cabinet officers who refused to carry out his orders on the destruction of evidence in the Watergate scandal.
• After refusing to terminate investigations of Republican politicians, seven US Attorneys were dismissed from the Department of Justice last month.

Public Employee Job Action
• Police refused to make traffic stops today to protest low salaries.
• Hundreds of firefighters called in sick yesterday to protest stalled negotiations.
• FAA traffic controllers failed to report for work today to protest cutbacks.

Mutiny
• The Somalia soldiers refused yesterday to obey orders until they were given back pay.
• The Pakistani soldiers refused today to fire on the Taliban, citing clan ties.

Assembly of Police/military
• Mugabe’s security forces were prominently assembled in large cities today, with the run-off election being held tomorrow.
• Hundreds of police officers assembled outside the arena where tomorrow’s demonstration was to take place.

Military Conduct of Police Functions
• Following days of riots that were sparked by the killing of a black teen, the National Guard was called in today to bring renewed order to the streets.
• Military units have been deployed throughout the capitol today, directing traffic, controlling access to buildings, and questioning suspicious passersby.

Routine State Acts: Formal
Abuse of Police Powers
• NYC city officials closed down the known gay bar several times for health code violations over the two weeks before the march.
• The military police questioned the family members of dissident leaders several times last week, often bringing them to police headquarters.
• Thinly guised undercover agents have been trailing the activists since the demonstrations began last week, often parking outside their homes at night.
• In the week before the election building inspectors targeted establishments that displayed signs supporting the opposition party.
Abuse of Legal Discretion

- Criminal charges were filed hours after Myanmar’s leading dissident was released yesterday from a ten-year prison sentence for anti-state acts.
- Prosecutors issued arrest warrants hours after the candidate filed his petition to be placed on the ballot today.
- Local prosecutors issued arrest warrants today for those operating the abortion clinic.

Abuse of Judicial Discretion

- Last night the court validated the military ruler’s jailing of opposition party members, refusing to invalidate the arrests.
- The judge sentenced the dissident to life imprisonment yesterday.
- In an opinion issued today, the federal court refused to grant the request to close the Japanese internment camps.

Routine State Acts: Coercive

Facility Closures

- The Iraqi government today shuttered the university buildings that had been used by students for anti-government protests.
- On Sunday, security forces shut down the offices of the legal clinic whose employees, they alleged, were undermining the government.

Suspension of Services

- Hours before the demonstration was to be held yesterday the government shut down the bus lines that fed the park where it was to be held.
- This morning the army cutoff water and electricity to the village to which the rebel forces had retreated.

Forced Relocations

- The police pushed the anti-government rioters out of the square last night.
- In January the government forced tens of thousands of peasants to relocate near plants in the city to implement their economic plans.
- Last night the government removed six Israeli families from an apartment in a Palestinian neighborhood that the settlers had been trying to claim.
- Israeli army forcibly evacuated 7,500 Palestinians from the West Bank refugee camp on Wednesday.
- By 10:00 yesterday the police dispersed the protestors, evacuating the park where the demonstrations took place.
- Last night the authorities pursued 48 dissidents, who fled across the border.
Restrictions on Movement

- Military set up many check points yesterday, controlling and denying access to parts of the city where anti-government protests were planned.
- Last week the South African Apartheid government issued orders requiring citizens of color to apply for identification cards to travel between cities.
- Since yesterday Cairo citizens were prevented by the police from traveling outside of the city, where anti-government forces were gathering.
- Security forces would not allow protestors to leave the park where last night’s violence had erupted.

Arrests/Detentions

- Several opposition party leaders were arrested today, just weeks before scheduled elections.
- Leaders of the anti-government protest movement were detained without formal charges being filed on Monday. The detentions came just hours before a planned nation-wide strike.

Exile of Political Opponents

- Former prime minister was banished this past week following a takeover by the opposition party.
- Activist and former challenger for President was sent to Britain by the new government.
- Mr. Park banned 48 anti-government protagonists yesterday; they were given asylum in China last month.

Property Confiscations

- Yesterday Russian police confiscated the cameras of British reporters trying to capture footage of the recent invasion of Latvia.
- Government forces today seized the factory of a wealthy businessman suspected of supporting the rebel movement.
- President Nasser today seized the Muslim Brotherhood's official headquarters in Cairo.

Physical Intrusions into Homes, Offices, etc.

- The Chinese police ransacked the home of the leader of Citizens against Censorship organization over the weekend.
- Secret Police broke into and searched the home of the opposition leader last night.
- The government reported that the FBI had ransacked the apartment of radical civil rights leaders last week; they were reportedly looking for incriminating materials.
**Political Power Reconfigurations**

*Political power reconfigurations are changes in upper-echelon governmental officials and constitutions at the national-level.*

For an event to be classified as a political power reconfiguration it must meet one of two straightforward criteria. The event must involve a change in top officials in the national government (chief executives, generals, cabinet ministers, judges, etc.) or it must involve a change in the national constitution (a new constitution, an amendment to the constitution). Unrealized political power reconfigurations involve unsuccessful efforts to change top government officials (e.g., unsuccessful coup d’État) or the national constitution (e.g., a defeated referendum to replace or amend the constitution).

Political power reconfigurations are included within the Societal Stability Protocol because they can affect the distribution of power within society, which can have significant consequences for different components of the population. These changes, and their potential consequences for the physical, social, and economic well-being of citizens, can generate a good deal of anxiety and uncertainty. They can also produce disruptive discontinuities in the administration of government policies and actions. This having been said, it must be emphasized that not all power reconfigurations are equally destabilizing. Violent coups can be very destabilizing, while orderly elections may be only minimally disruptive – and may even have regenerative effects. Indeed, a series of seamless power reconfigurations may be an indicator of societal stability. Also, while some reconfigurations can affect whole governments, or at least the head of the government, others involve just targeted officials (bureaucrats, generals, judges, legislators, etc.). Other power reconfigurations can affect the foundations of government and design of governmental institutions (i.e., constitutional changes).

Figure 4 outlines the key components of a political power reconfiguration.

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**Figure 4**

*Two Criteria for Political Power Reconfigurations*

- Change in
  - Upper Echelon Officials, National Government
  - National Constitutions

Cline Center for Democracy, University of Illinois

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Types of Political Power Reconfigurations
There are eight Tier 2 categories of reconfiguration events and two subcategories that deal with unrealized power reconfigurations:

- Removal from Power
- Ascension to Power
- Electoral Victory
- Electoral Defeat
- Asked to Form Government
- Appointment Announced
- Appointment Confirmed
- Constitutional Change
- Attempted (use only with other choice)
- Conspiracy (use only with other choice)

Removals from power are differentiated from ascensions to power because reconfigurations of power are not always seamless affairs. Often someone is removed from power well before someone ascends to power, which means that these are distinct events that are covered in different news reports – and captured in different event records. The next two cognates involved interim situations that fall short of a removal from or ascension to power but were sufficiently important happening to merit capture. The timing of electoral victories and defeats of incumbents usually do not coincide with the actual transfer of power, so these are captured as independent events. Being asked to form a government is not the same thing as ascension to power – efforts to form a government often fail – but they are important to note. Finally, the announcement and confirmation of appointments are distinct from actually assuming office; thus, they are categorized independently. The approval of constitutional changes can be simultaneous with their implementation, but normally they are not. In categorizing political power reconfigurations it is also important to capture attempted power reconfigurations and conspiracies to reconfigure power. Attempted power reconfigurations are those whose implementation failed (unsuccessful coups, defeated constitutional changes). Conspiracies to reconfigure power are unrealized power reconfigurations that were discovered before the implementation stage (arrests of military officers planning to overthrow the government). The “Attempt” and “Conspiracy” options should only be used in conjunction with the removal from power or the constitutional change option; it would never be used with the “Ascension to Power” option since those involved realized reconfigurations of power. Moreover, it is unlikely that the “Conspiracy” option would ever be used with constitutional changes.
There are a variety of ways in which governmental officials are removed from power. Twelve Tier 3 options are provided, but not all options are relevant for all of the officials listed above. They are organized within six cognates:

- Term of Office Ended
- Interim Term Ended

- Popular Vote
- Parliamentary Vote (No confidence)

- Resignation Forced by Opposition
- Resignation Forced by Own Party

- Judicial Removal
- Impeached
- Coup (forcibly removed)

- Voluntary Resignation
- Death or Incapacitation (no foul play)

- Firing or Forced Resignation by Superior
- Office Abolished

The first cognate involves the simplest and least disruptive way for personnel changes to take place: the end of one’s term in office (whether it is a regular or an interim term). These normally represent seamless transitions and are a hallmark of stable societies. The second cognate involves being involuntarily removed from office by the vote of others; it includes removal by popular vote or parliamentary vote (i.e., a vote of “No confidence”). The third cognate includes involuntary removals due to legislative pressure. This cognate pertains largely to parliamentary systems, where sometimes prime ministers resign under pressure before a formal vote is taken. Sometimes these resignations are due to pressure from opposition parties; other times the pressure comes from the prime minister’s own party or coalition. However, within presidential systems it is conceivable that a president would resign under threat of impeachment, as was the case with Richard Nixon. News accounts often provide sufficient information to differentiate the source of the pressure to resign; in many situations both options within this cognate will apply.

The next cognate involves a set of options involving involuntary removals that are not the result of formal votes or legislative pressures. The options here involve the exercise of both legal power and coercive power. The first is judicial removal, which involves a court ordering the removal of a government official. The legal basis for the decision may be that the official did not meet the constitutional requirements, illegally obtained office, or violated some other legal requirement for holding office. The second option here is impeachment. Impeachments ordinarily involve some type of hybrid proceeding (i.e., legislative-judicial) for some type of official misconduct while in office. Impeachments involved tainted removals and are ordinarily messy and destabilizing affairs. The last
option in this cognate is a coup. It is an even more destabilizing type of removal in which the government is forcibly removed – either by force or the threat of force. The fifth cognate includes voluntary resignations and reconfigurations due to death or incapacitation. The final cognate is for lower level officials (normally executives); it includes dismissals, forced resignations and the abolition of offices.

Most ascensions to political power involve an election, an appointment, or some type of succession. The Tier 3 categories for ascensions to power are as follows:

- Direct Election
- Indirect Election
- Appointment by Elected Entity
- Appointment by Non-elected Entity
- Hereditary Succession
- Constitutional Succession
- Coup

The first cognate includes electoral modes of ascension; it includes both a direct option (popular election) and an indirect option (election by parliament, electoral college, etc.). The second cognate includes ascension by appointment. Appointments can be by an elected official (e.g., the president asks the leader of a party to form a government) or by a non-elected entity (a military junta or foreign occupier asks an individual to form a government). There are two types of successions. In some governance structures (i.e., monarchies) hereditary succession occurs; in others constitutional succession (in the case of death, incapacitation, or removal). The last cognate is for those who come to office by means of a coup d’état.

For constitutional events operators need only distinguish between three situations: those involving the convening of a constitutional convention, the drafting of a new constitution, or situations involving amendments to an existing constitution.

Examples of Political Power Reconfiguration, by Subcategory

The following are examples of the type of events that fall within each of the categories listed above:

Removals

Term Ended
- President Bush left office today at the end of his second term.
- The Israeli prime minister’s interim appointment ended yesterday.

Not Re-elected
- Robert Mugabe’s bid for re-election failed.
- Jimmy Carter was defeated by Ronald Reagan in yesterday’s election.
Coerced Resignation
- After weeks of being scrutinized in the press over his relationship to a teenage congressional page, the congressman resigned yesterday.
- The prime minister resigned today after an angry confrontation with party leaders who, on Thursday, said they could no longer support him.
- Under great pressure to resign after the latest damaging scandal, the President submitted his resignation early this morning.
- Prime Minister Brown resigned today after the conservative sweep in parliamentary elections.

Voluntary Resignation
- Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor announced her resignation early this morning citing the recent downturn of her health.
- The popular defense secretary submitted his resignation today, citing his desire to retire to his home.
- Several members of the legislature resigned today in order to avoid the strictures of the new ethics legislation, which would have limited their employment opportunities.

Coup
- Prime Minister Velasco of Ecuador was ousted in a military uprising this morning.
- A group of generals, with the support of troops, removed the president from office yesterday and established a military government.
- King Farouk was removed from power after the success revolt led by Gamal Nasser entered the palace grounds this morning.

Impeachment
- After being impeached the president was removed by a vote of the upper house late last night.
- After refusing to resign, the legislature today removed the president in accord with the constitution.

Incapacitation
- After the president’s stroke the vice-president assumed office this morning.
- The prime minister went into a coma today and his duties were assumed by his long-time ally in Parliament.

Dismissal
- President dismissed the Minister of Education last week after a report revealed that his initiatives were riddled with corruption.
- Hu Yaobang was abruptly dismissed today by China's Communist Party leaders.
- Raul Castro dismissed half of his brother’s cabinet this morning in an effort to foster openness.

Dissolution of Office
- With the end of the Iraq War, the Department of Homeland Security was dissolved.
- Parliament voted today to dissolve the Ministry of Labor and Industry.
- Nasser abolished the Executive Cabinet position today, forcing former King Farouk's chief deputy out of office.

Accessions
Election
- President Obama was sworn in as the new president of the United States of America at noon today.
- Prime Minister Gavarri took office this morning after Social Democrats gained a majority in last month’s parliamentary elections.

Appointment
- The president today appointed the popular general to become the new defense secretary.
- The Socialist Party was asked to form a new government by the president after winning a sweeping electoral victory.

Line of Succession
- After the assassination of President John F. Kennedy, Vice President Lyndon B. Johnson was sworn in today as Chief Executive.
- Vice President Ford assumed the presidency today after Nixon’s resignation.

Lineage
- After the death of the Saudi king last week, the crown prince assumed control of the government.
- After yesterday’s abdication, the queen’s brother became king.

Coup
- Slobodan Milosevic rose to power today after a series of coups against incumbents.
- The rebel leader took control of government today after last week’s coup.
Constitutional Events

Proposed
- After the fall of the military junta, the interim government proposed a new constitution today.

Under Consideration
- Hearings on the Equal Rights Amendment were held today.

Rejected
- Congress rejected the prayer in school amendment today.

Approved
- The new constitution was supported by an overwhelming majority of the voters in yesterday’s referendum.

Mass Movement of People

Mass movements of people are abrupt, large-scale relocations of humans.

Three criteria must be met for an event to be properly classified as a mass movement of people. The first criterion is that there must be a movement of people into or out of a locale. Movements of capital, resources or animals do not qualify. Whether a movement is categorized as being “into or out of” a locale usually depends on the orientation of the news report (i.e., whether it is a story about the departure or about the destination). However, diasporas involve concerted en mass movements to diverse locales. In other cases, large numbers of individuals move to one destination from more than one locale. [Follow-up questions in the protocol ask about the source and destination of displaced individuals.] The second criterion is that the movement of individuals must be abrupt. Slow-moving immigration and emigration are processes not events. Abrupt relocations are events that are normally rooted in other events. The prototypical mass movement involves refugees fleeing to escape civil conflict, ethnic cleansing, political persecution, disease, famine, etc. But this category also includes less dramatic movements such as an exodus of: (1) trained professionals fleeing after a sharp economic downturn; (2) politicians escaping after a dramatic and sudden regime change; and (3) wealthy families exiting after the election of a populist Marxist. The third criterion is that there must be a large-scale movement of people. There are no specific minimum criteria for what constitutes “large-scale.” In a remote African rural area a few thousand people may constitute a large-scale movement. In densely populated industrial areas in China this may amount to little more than a trickle. But situations involving a handful of émigrés cannot be considered large-scale. Information on the size of the movement will be captured in follow-up questions that will provide the basis for differentiating among different mass movements.

Mass movements are considered destabilizing events for a variety of reasons. First, the fact that large numbers of people are departing their home suggests that
something very serious is amiss. Moreover, the factors that are behind these relocations, in addition to the effect of the relocation on the displaced people, will have deleterious effects on the psyches and physical well-being of those displaced. These factors combine to create what is often a highly concentrated encampment of often desperate and vulnerable individuals. The arrival of these individuals can also generate anxiety and resentment in the locale to which they move. Indeed, mass movements are often the stimulus for extended episodes of destabilizing events (politically motivated attacks, demonstrations, etc.).

Figure 5 outlines the key components of a mass movement.

**Types of Mass Movements**
There are only two Tier 2 options for the mass movement category. Most of the differentiating information on these events comes from follow-up queries on the number of people involved, the source (or destination) of the movement, the origins of the movement, and the motivations of the displaced individuals. The Tier 2 categories are: (1) Departures and (2) Arrivals.

**Examples of Mass Movements of People, by Subcategory**
**Departures**
- Roughly 2500 Cubans fled for Florida last week in fear of the pending Communist take-over of Fidel Castro.
- Advances of guerrilla forces last month compel thousands to flee rural communities in the northern Somalia.
- Thousands of Turkish citizens have fled to Germany after Ataturk's attack on Islamic traditions last week.
• Fighting in the Darfur region led hundreds of thousands of Darfurians to flee to camps in Chad in the past two weeks.
• A cholera outbreak that began on Monday has produced a mass migration from eastern Congo.

Arrivals
• Thousands of Albanian Greeks have flooded back into Albania over the past 2 weeks as a result of new protectionist labor policies in Greece.
• Thousands of refugees arrive in neighboring Sudan last month trying to escape famine in Ethiopia.
• Thousands of Turkish citizens arrived in ethnic enclaves in Germany last month after Turkey’s economic collapse.

Cataclysmic Events

Cataclysmic events are calamitous happenings caused by natural forces (wind, water, lightning, tectonic movements, heat, etc.) human error or some combination of both.

Two criteria must be met for an event to be properly classified as a cataclysmic event. First, the event must involve a calamitous happening. In other words, it must entail major damage to people or property, or both. There are no specific criteria for what constitutes a calamity; follow-up questions capture information on the level of damage. But a tornado that misses the coast and causes no damage would not qualify as a calamitous happening. Nor would a near-miss involving airplanes. The second criterion is that the damage inflicted by the calamitous happening must be caused by natural forces, human error, or some combination of both. Natural forces are readily identifiable and the list set provided in the Societal Stability Protocol facilitate their specification. The “human error” component of this criterion means that the individual whose actions led to the calamitous happening did not intend to cause the resulting damages. That is, the damages were the result of negligence, ignorance, inattentiveness, etc. Sometimes damages are due to a combination of natural forces and unintended human behavior (a camp fire that gets out of control in a drought and causes a major forest fire; an accident caused in a laboratory that is working with inherently dangerous materials). Happenings that meet these criteria are considered as destabilizing events because of their impact on physical surroundings as well as the psyche of individuals affected by them. Figure 6 outlines the key components of a cataclysmic event.

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2 If the damages were intended and were motivated by political factors, then the event should be classified in the “Politically Motivated Attack” category. If the damages were intended but not politically motivated, the event would be a criminal action (and deemed irrelevant).
**Types of Cataclysmic Events**

The options for the Tier 2 categorizations are as follows:

1. Natural Disasters
2. Human Error Events
3. Hybrid Cataclysmic Events.

The Tier 3 options for natural disasters are as follows:

- Hurricane
- Tsunami
- Tornado
- Blizzard
- Heat Wave
- Flood
- Fire Caused by Natural Events
- Drought
- Epidemic
- Earthquake
- Volcano
- Avalanche
- Landslide/mudslide
Most of the natural disasters included in this list set are well-defined happenings that are easily identified and distinctive from any other type of destabilizing event. One exception involves fire. Only fires that are caused solely by natural forces (i.e., lightning strikes during dry seasons) should be included in this category.

Human error events involve cataclysmic happening that are attributable to the actions of humans (i.e., accidents, negligence, or wanton disregard for the welfare of others). There are three options for the human error subcategory:

- Mobile Equipment
- Non-Mobile (facilities, infrastructure, etc.)
- Product Safety

Mobile equipment events include such things as train and airplane crashes while non-mobile events involve such things as plant explosions, bridge collapses, and the failure of such things as dams and levees. Product safety events involve negligence or wanton disregard in the production of consumer goods that jeopardize the health and safety of humans. They can involve the use of dangerous chemicals in food, pharmaceuticals, or other products processing, as well as design errors in the engineering of consumer goods.

Hybrid events involve cataclysmic happenings that involve a combination of human error and natural forces. For example, explosions might be due to the joint effect of handling natural gas and faulty piping; radioactive fallout can also be due to a combination of negligence and the inherent toxicity of radioactive material. The Tier 3 options for hybrid cataclysmic events are:

- Famine
- Epidemic (aided by human conduct)
- Fire (aided by human negligence)
- Explosion
- Radioactive Fallout

Epidemic and fires are the potentially most challenging of these happenings to categorize properly. Some epidemics are caused solely by natural forces (i.e., water contaminations caused by a flood); these would be properly classified within the natural disaster category. But sometime epidemics are hybrid events. An example of a hybrid epidemic would be when a government does not allow international aid (food, medicine, water, medical staff, etc.) to flow into an area that experienced a natural disaster for fear of undermining itself or aiding rebel forces in the area. As noted above, a fire could be wholly due to natural factors. But other times it is caused by a combination of natural conditions and human negligence (i.e., careless campers in dry season), in which case it would be categorized as a hybrid event. However, if a fire was purposely caused by humans for political reasons, it should be placed within the “Politically Motivated Attack” category.”
Examples of Cataclysmic Events, by Subcategory

Natural Disasters
Hurricane, Tsunami
- With winds of up to 200 MPH, Hurricane Katrina destroyed thousands of New Orleans homes yesterday.
- The tsunami wiped out several cities in Kerala last week, killing hundreds of thousands.

Tornado
- Tornadoes swept through the central part of India on Wednesday, destroying hundreds of homes and killing dozens.

Blizzard
- A blizzard struck cities and villages in the central plains last week, stranding thousands and killing 24.

Heat Wave
- Due to an historical heat wave last month in France, 234 died and tens of thousands of homeless people were forced to shelters.

Flood
- Massive rains last week caused the delta to flood yesterday and washed away thousands of homes, killing hundreds.

Fire
- Wildfires spreading up and down the coast of Southern California were responsible for the destruction of more than 5,000 homes last week.
- Lightening struck a wooded area on Monday during the height of the drought starting a fire that destroyed several villages; hundreds were asphyxiated.

Drought
- The longest-running drought in Ethiopia has been blamed for the death of thousands of starving children over the past month.

Epidemic
- An outbreak of malaria last month in recently flooded areas, killed scores of the young and elderly in Somalia.
- A smallpox breakout in central Africa last week has been blamed for the deaths of 35 infants; many others reported ill.

Earthquake
- An earthquake measuring 7.0 on the Richter scale shook central Italy this morning, killing 10,000 and destroying several villages.
Volcano
- A volcano in central Turkey erupted today, wiping out villages and forcing thousands of residents to flee; hundreds were killed.

Avalanche
- An avalanche along the Amalfi coast on Monday cut off thousands of villagers; hundreds died from exposure.

Human Error Events
Mobile Equipment
- Last night a commercial airliner’s engine failed outside Chicago and crashed miles from runway; all 259 aboard died.

Capital Facilities
- Yesterday 18 were killed in mine collapse outside of Johannesburg.
- Carelessness was blamed for the explosion in the plant on Monday that killed 39 and generated a massive cloud of toxic fumes that sickened thousands of others in surrounding communities.

Product Safety
- The FDA announced a recall of food products today after an outbreak of salmonella poisoning.
- A recall was issued on Thursday after faulty tires were established as cause for a dozen automobile crashes that killed a dozen people across the U.S.
- A report issued today said that dangerous toxins were found in toothpaste manufactured in China after the deaths of dozens of children were reported.

Hybrid Events
Famine
- According to a new report, the U.N.’s grain embargo has caused food shortage and aggravated the effects of famine and contributed to the starvation of thousands of children.
- Hundreds of Burmese citizens died in the past week after the Myanmar government refused to accept international aid in the wake of the tsunami.

Epidemic
- The smallpox outbreak was attributed to superstitious parents who refused to take advantage of free vaccines that were readily available.
- The epidemic spread rapidly because the government refused to allow international aid agencies to distribute medical supplies donated by the UN.

Fire
- Yesterday’s devastating forest fire was attributed to campfires set in no-burn zones.
• The fire that destroyed the plant last week was due to the careless handling of deadly chemicals that were placed near an open flame.

Explosion
• Payoffs of government officials were revealed to have led to carelessness within the plant where last week’s explosion of dangerous chemicals led to the death of twenty-three undocumented workers.
• Neglected safety checks blamed for deadly explosion yesterday at the industrial chemical plant.

Radioactive Fallout
• Lax procedures at the nuclear power plant were found to have contributed to the release of a radioactive cloud that descended on the city last week.

Event Boundaries within SPEED’s Destabilizing Event Ontology

The definitions of the six Tier 1 categories of destabilizing events – along with the Tier 2 and Tier 3 categorizations and illustrative examples – demonstrate that these categories constitute largely distinct sets of happenings. At the margins of the event boundaries of the Tier 1 groupings, however, ambiguities can arise. These ambiguities may lead to some confusion as to where a particular happening may belong – or whether it fits within SPEED’s destabilizing event ontology at all. The following discussion highlights the distinctiveness of each Tier 1 categories and identifies potential sources of ambiguity with other event categories. It will provide guidance as to how to address the ambiguities that arise in the context of discrete news reports. Particular attention will be given to political expression events, politically motivated attacks and destabilizing state acts because the other three event categories (political power reconfigurations, mass movements of individuals, and cataclysmic) have more concrete referents.

Distinctiveness of Political Expression Events

The centrality of words and non-violent symbolic acts by private actors is what distinguishes political expression events from other events in SPEED destabilizing event ontology. Political expression events and politically motivated attacks both involve the public expression of threatening and unwelcome political messages. The basic distinction between the two categories is the medium by which these messages are conveyed. In political expression events these messages are conveyed using words or symbolic acts that do not inflict damage on others. In politically motivated attacks, messages are conveyed using threatening physical acts intended to inflict damage on others. Words can injure others but not in the same way that physical acts injure them; the harm is limited to psychic damage. Symbolic acts can intentionally inflict damage on their initiator (hunger strikes, self-immolation, etc.), but not others. If they intentionally inflict damages on others (e.g., suicide attacks) they are politically motivated attacks not symbolic actions. Sometimes actions are initiated by individuals to express political sentiments with words
or symbolic actions, but they evolve into physical acts that inflict damage on others. These situations should be considered to be two distinct events; the first would be a political expression event, the second a politically motivated attack.

Like political expression events, destabilizing state acts include threatening and unwelcome political messages. But they also include a set of formal and coercive physical acts. By definition, however, destabilizing state acts are initiated by government actors acting in their official capacity. Thus, even when destabilizing state acts are similar in form to political expression events (i.e., they are verbal/written messages or symbolic acts), there can be no overlap; by definition political expression events are initiated by non-governmental actors or governmental officials acting in their capacity as private citizens. Moreover, while political expression events are important for what they portend, destabilizing state acts are important for what they are: actions and pronouncements by perpetrated by powerful societal actors that are backed up by the resources of the state. Most political expression events are backed up by little more than the sentiments of those who initiate them and the sentiments of those with whom the message resonates. Under certain circumstances, however, these messages can be important catalysts for change.

Political power reconfigurations are defined by actions that reflect changes in personnel or constitutions – or actions that attempt such changes. Publicly expressed sentiments for these changes may precede at least some reconfigurations of power, but they are irrelevant to the categorization of an event as a reconfiguration of political power. Likewise, mass movements of individuals are defined by the act of relocating. In some situations these relocations may be an expression of political sentiments (i.e., voting with one’s feet) that are threatening or unwelcome. Thus, this subset of relocations may be considered a symbolic act. In these cases it would be appropriate to view these events as both symbolic political expressions and mass movements. This is unnecessary, however, because information derived from the “Attributed Origins” section of the Societal Stability Protocol will provide the basis for identifying relocations that are symbolic acts. The distinction between political expression events and cataclysmic events is straightforward. Cataclysmic events are defined by the human and physical damage they do and differentiated by the source of the damage – natural forces, human error, or some combination thereof. Natural forces cannot express political sentiments and, by definition, cannot be political expression events. Catastrophes caused by human error – negligence, incompetence, thoughtlessness, etc. – lack the intentionality required to constitute a political message of any kind. Indeed, if human error events were politically motivated they would fall within the politically motivated attack category. Political expression events may precede these calamitous happenings, or follow in their wake. But these would be considered separate events and are irrelevant to the categorization of a happening as a cataclysmic event.

**Distinctiveness of Politically Motivated Attacks**

The centrality of threatening physical acts perpetrated by humans and intended to damage the persons or property of others is what distinguishes politically motivated attacks from other events in the SPEED destabilizing event ontology. The distinction between these
attacks and political expression events was noted above. There can be no overlap between these two Tier 1 categories because the only type of harmful physical act potentially classifiable as a political expression event are symbolic acts that cause self-inflicted harm – not harm to others. In contrast to these other event categories there is an overlap between politically motivated attacks and destabilizing state acts. There is a conceptual overlap between politically motivated attacks and destabilizing state acts because a subset of the latter can involve threatening physical acts perpetrated by humans and intended to damage the persons or property of others. This is handled in the Societal Stability Protocol by classifying qualifying state attacks as politically motivated attacks; there are no options within the “Destabilizing State Acts” category for violent attacks. The two sets of politically motivated attacks (i.e., those initiated by private actors and those initiated by government agents) will be separated using information on the type of actor that initiated the attack.

Political power reconfigurations relate to changes in upper echelon personnel in the national government or national constitutions – or efforts to bring about such changes. A range of physical acts might be involved in generating political reconfigurations, but the reconfigurations are defined by the changes themselves. If violent attacks precede, accompany or follow a power reconfiguration, they would be coded as separate events and would be linked to the reconfiguration. But they are actually and conceptually distinct from it. Thus, there is no overlap in these categories. The same is true for mass movements of individuals. These events are defined by the act of relocating, which has nothing to do with intentionally inflicting harm on others. Some mass movements may follow politically motivated attacks and some may generate them. But the existence of these events is irrelevant to the categorization of the happenings as mass movements. The distinction between politically motivated attacks and cataclysmic events is equally straightforward. Cataclysmic events, like attacks, inflict damage on people and their property. But natural disasters, by definition, are not perpetrated by human. And human-error and hybrid cataclysmic events, lack the intentionality that is a key component of politically motivated attacks. Indeed, if human-initiated catastrophes were rooted in political factors they would not properly be categorized as cataclysmic events.

**Distinctiveness of Destabilizing State Acts**

Because of the array of potentially destabilizing acts that are included within this category, it is the conceptually the least tidy event categories. Thus, while there is no overlap with political expression events because they cannot be initiated by government agents acting in their official capacity, there are overlaps with politically motivated attacks, political power reconfigurations, and cataclysmic events. The lack of tidiness of the “Destabilizing State Acts” category is handled within the Societal Stability Protocol by the careful stipulation of a subset of destabilizing acts that can only be initiated by state actors and including them as the Tier 2 and Tier 3 categories within the “Destabilizing State Acts” category. Destabilizing acts committed by state actors that fall within other categories (politically motivated attacks, political power reconfigurations, and human error/hybrid catastrophes) will be differentiated on the basis of initiator type. Finally, it should be noted that while the “Forced Relocations” option in the
“Destabilizing State Acts” category is similar to a “Mass Movement of Individuals” event but the two happenings are distinctive and should be categorized separately. Forced relocations normally involve a formal policy designed to promote a government policy, like economic restructuring (i.e., moving peasants into factories or farmers from one region to another to develop a new crop). Some refugee movements may be the result of state coercion but not necessarily formal, announced policies.

**Distinctiveness of the Other Destabilizing Event Categories**

The remaining three Tier 1 categories, Political Power Reconfigurations, Mass Movements of Individuals, and Cataclysmic Events have been differentiated from the other three Tier 1 categories above. Moreover, they are fairly distinct sets of happenings that are unlikely to be confused with one another. While in some instances mass movements, political power reconfigurations, and cataclysmic events may fall closely together in time and space, the types of happenings involved in each (natural disasters, human errors, relocations, conscious acts to rearrange power arrangements, etc.) are unlikely to cause classification problems.
Appendix I

Destabilizing Event Ontology