

**Climate Change, Social Stress and Violent Conflict**  
**State of the Art and Research Needs**  
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*Abstract*

**The SPEED project, climate change and societal stability**

**Peter F. Nardulli**

*University of Illinois, USA*

This presentation will introduce conference participants to an on-going project, the Social Political and Economic Event Database Project (SPEED) and discuss its implications for the study of climate change and instability. The project uses advanced information technologies to extract targeted information from a global archive of 35 million news reports from such diverse sources as the New York Times, the Foreign Broadcast Information Service, the Summary of World Broadcasts, and the Cline Center News Website Crawling Service. The latter service began in the beginning of 2006 and pulls news reports from over 5,000 news feeds several times each day. The news reports in the archive begin on January 1, 1946 and are updated daily.

The presentation will focus on the Societal Stability Protocol, which extract information on such things as political expression events (demonstration, speeches, symbolic acts, etc.), politically motivated attacks, destabilizing state acts, political power reconfigurations, mass movements of people and cataclysmic events. The event data extracted is temporally and spatially referenced (to the city level, where applicable). It also collects an encompassing array of data on initiators, targets, victims, intensity measures, event origins, attributed motivations, etc. It is readily importable into GIS programs and can be displayed in a variety of formats.

The Societal Stability Protocol has been generating “production data” for several months. Moreover, beginning in September a research strategy will be deployed to examine the distribution of instability indicators with respect to a number of episodes of large-scale, weather-related disasters (droughts, heat waves, storms, etc.). Some preliminary data will be available for the conference, though the primary thrust of the presentation will be on the future utility of the SPEED project.