Early and Late Warning by the UN Secretary-General of Threats to the Peace: Article 99 Revisited

A. Walter Dorn


Early warning is an essential first step for conflict prevention. In order to respond in time, authorities need to know in advance of emerging threats to the peace. The designers of the United Nations foresaw this and gave the UN Secretary-General a special role. In fact, the only independent political role given to the Secretary-General in the UN Charter is that of warning. Under Article 99, the Secretary-General is authorized to warn formally the Security Council about new threats to international peace and security. This is an important function since the Security Council has primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. But is warning, especially early warning, by the UN Secretary-General working out in practice? A review of UN history shows that in the over 100 conflicts in which the Secretary-General intervened, only a very few included a formal Article 99 invocation. In addition to three explicit invocations recognized by the UN (Congo 1960, Iran 1979 and Lebanon 1989) there are over a dozen implied invocations in the Council. Most of these, however, were late warnings or statements of support for warnings already provided by member states. There have also been some warnings made at informal Council meetings but these are not direct invocations of Article 99, as interpreted by the UN, since the Secretary-General did not place a new item on the agenda of the Council or call for a special meeting. Most significantly, in the vast majority of conflicts, no warning was given at all. Given this paucity of early warning, one might reasonably ask why early warning is so infrequent and difficult.
This chapter reviews the historical cases, summarizes the Secretary-General’s constraints and opportunities for early warning in each of the three stages (information gathering, analysis and dissemination) and makes suggestions about how some of the obstacles can be overcome. In recent years, there have been great strides in the study and implementation of UN early warning systems, as described here and in other chapters in this volume. For both technical and political reasons, the UN Secretary-General is now in a better position to carry out early warning than ever before but certain improvements are called for, namely: better targeting and gathering of necessary information, easier access for on-site observers, increased information/intelligence-sharing, tighter confidentiality systems, a stronger analytical capacity (including for scenario building), quicker feedback at headquarters and a more proactive approach in issuing warnings and undertaking response measures. This may be a tall order, but the goal of early warning for conflict prevention is worthy of all such efforts.

**HISTORICAL REVIEW**

Even in the depths of World War II, some people were thinking about how to build a durable peace, based on a new international organization, after the War. There was widespread agreement that the international civil service, introduced with the League of Nations, needed to be retained and strengthened. Lamenting that states in the League had always sounded the alarm too late, in 1943 Lord Viscount Cranborne of Great Britain proposed that this vital job be given to the “chief permanent official” of the proposed new organization.

[He] should be empowered to bring before members on his own initiative any potentially dangerous development at an early stage before an aggressor has time to gird himself for war [...]. If the Earl, Lord Perth [the League's first Secretary-General, Sir Eric Drummond], had enjoyed this power as Secretary-General of the League, the history of the League might have been a very different one.1

He reasoned that,

> it is always embarrassing for a nation, and especially a small nation, to attribute aggressive intentions to a neighboring country with whom it is ostensibly in friendly relations. Consequently the tendency ... was for Member States of the League to raise a question of this kind when the situation was already so acute that there was no way of averting armed conflict. [T]he chief permanent official ... will be an international official and therefore not open to the same embarrassment as Ministers of individual states.

A warning role had, in fact, been assigned to the League Secretary-General as early as 1920, but the notion was never enshrined in the League’s Covenant nor actively implemented.2 Sir Eric Drummond was later to say, “I wish I had Article 99 at my disposal.”3

Towards the end of World War II, the allied nations, with Hitler's Blitzkrieg and Japan's surprise attacks still fresh in memory, recognized the need for independent warnings of threats to the peace. In June 1945, the negotiators from fifty nations who gathered in San Francisco to
prepare and sign the UN Charter decided to include in it a novel provision, which gave
a new right to the UN Secretary-General, who was to be accountable to no nation in particular but
to the organization as a whole. The right had previously only been conferred upon states: the
ability to convocate a meeting of the Security Council on his own initiative in order to issue a
warning regarding a matter that was not yet on the Council’s agenda. In Article 99, the Charter
states, “the Secretary-General may bring to the attention of the Security Council any matter which
in his opinion may threaten the maintenance of international peace and security.” Sir Eric
Drummond commented on this new provision:

The Secretary-General of the League could only act through and at the request of a Member of the
League; the Secretary-General of the UN can act on his own initiative. In view of this difference in
functioning, the method of approach of the two officers is or was necessarily of a different
character.

The Preparatory Commission in San Francisco commented on the new article:

Under Article 99 of the Charter, moreover, he [the Secretary-General] has been given a special
right which goes beyond any power previously accorded to the head of an international
organization, viz, to bring to the attention of the Security Council any matter (not merely any
dispute or situation) which, in his opinion, may threaten the maintenance of international peace and
security. It is impossible to foresee how this Article will be applied; but the responsibility it confers
upon the Secretary-General will require the exercise of the highest qualities of political judgment,
tact and integrity.4

The inclusion of Article 99 was an ambitious initiative designed to give the Security Council
the benefit of warnings about current or potential threats to the peace so that that body may take
appropriate (presumably preventive) action. In UN terminology, the phrase “bring to the attention
of the Security Council” means to have a new item inscribed on the agenda of the Security
Council. Thus, Article 99 applies only to “new matters,” i.e., ones that are not already being
discussed by the Security Council.5 In actual practice, however, the UN Secretaries-General have
interpreted Article 99 much more broadly, providing them with authority to carry out independent
fact-finding activities and gather information for crisis management as well as for prevention.

Under the restrictive UN definition, Article 99 has been invoked infrequently in UN history. These
cases of Article 99 invocation, described in Table 14.1, are quite instructive. The only cases
that qualify as rigorous invocations, however, are those dealing with the crises in the Congo
(1960), Iran (1979) and Lebanon (1989).6 The first and third instances constituted “late” warnings
but are nonetheless important cases. In the Iranian hostage case (1979), Article 99 served merely as
a means to address the Security Council on a crisis that was already in the spotlight but which the
Council had not yet taken up formally. In all other cases in Table 14.1, the matter had already been
placed on the agenda of the Council by one or more Member States before the Secretary-General
addressed it, though he was sometimes the first to speak to the matter at the first meeting on the
subject. There are many other cases where the Secretary-General went before the Security Council
to warn about potential escalations of conflicts that were already being discussed by the Security
Council, but these are not considered here since the focus is on prevention at the outset of a
conflict. A look at the invocations listed in Table 14.1 illustrates some of the practical and political constraints on the Secretary-General in issuing warnings, especially early warnings.

Table 14.1 describes the instances in which the Secretary-General (SG) has formally brought to the attention of the Security Council (SC) new matters that posed a threat to international peace and security, thereby exercising the substance of the responsibilities conferred upon him by Article 99 of the UN Charter. However, by a strict application of Article 99, formal invocation of the Article has occurred only three times in the first half century, in the Congo (1960), Iran (1979) and Lebanon (1989). The table covers the period up to the end of term of Secretary-General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar (December 1991).

Table 14.1: The Secretary-General Alerts the Security Council.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Secretary-General</th>
<th>Meeting Date</th>
<th>Situation Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Trygve Lie (1946-53)</td>
<td>25 Jun 1950</td>
<td>North Korea attacked South Korea earlier that day. USA notified SG of attack. SG obtained independent confirmation and details of attack from the UN Commission on Korea. SC passed resolutions condemning the attack as a breach of the peace. [Lie, pp. 323-33]</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dag Hammarskjöld (1953-61)</td>
<td>7 Sep 1959</td>
<td>Laos alleged Vietnamese aggression and requested SG to send an emergency UN force. SC passes resolutions condemning the attack as a breach of the peace. [YUN, 1959, pp. 62-65]</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>13 Jul 1960</td>
<td>Congolese government cabled SG with a request to send a UN force. SC requests urgent meeting of the SC for that evening on “a matter which, in my opinion, may threaten international peace and security.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Event</td>
<td>SG's Action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22 Jul 1961</td>
<td>Fighting intensified around Bizerta, Tunisia, between French forces and Tunisian soldiers</td>
<td>At the second SC meeting dealing with the Bizerta question, SG speaks to SC: “News reaching us from Tunisia indicates that the serious and threatening development which the Council took up for consideration yesterday continues, with risks of irreparable damage to international peace and security.” In view of the “obligations of the Secretary-General acting under Article 99,” he appeals to SC to make an immediate call for cease-fire and return of all armed forces to original positions. SC adopts a resolution with these provisions by vote of 10-0, with France refusing to participate. [Cordier &amp; Foote, vol. V, pp. 526-530]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29 Apr 1963</td>
<td>The Imam of Yemen had been deposed in a coup d’état by Republicans. The UAR recognized new regime, while Saudi Arabia supported the Imam. Fighting broke out. UAR sent troops.</td>
<td>SG informs SC of his initiatives to ensure against “any development in the situation which might threaten the peace in the area.” He explains that the three parties have agreed to the stationing of a UN observer mission (UNYOM) and will pay for it. UNYOM is established to observe disengagement and withdrawal of foreign forces, including supervision of a demilitarized zone. At 11 June 1963 meeting Thant warns that “disengagement may be jeopardized if the United Nations observation personnel are not on the spot.” SC passed resolution approving observation force, which conducted operations until 4 Sep 1964. [Cordier &amp; Foote, vol. VI, pp. 328-30]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 Jul 1971</td>
<td>Awami League declares the</td>
<td>SG distributes a confidential memorandum to SC members, “warning them that the conflict</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Kurt Waldheim (1972-81)  
16 Jul 1974  
Cyprus crisis was re-ignited when Greek Cypriot National Guard staged a coup d’état on 15 July against President Makarios, who fled from the Island.  
SG requests SC President to convene an emergency meeting, in view of the seriousness of the matter in relation to international peace and security and in view of the UN involvement in Cyprus. The permanent representative of Cyprus also requests meeting. SC endorsed continued UN peacekeeping efforts and authorized SG to attempt to mediate the dispute. However, it was only on 20 July, the day of the Turkish invasion that the Security Council passed a resolution calling for a cease-fire. [YUN, 1974, p. 262]

30 Mar 1976 & 16 Mar 1978  
Civil war in Lebanon since 1975. Israel invaded Southern Lebanon on 15 Mar 1978 to destroy Palestinian bases and curb raids into Israel.  
In both cases, SG brings to the attention of the Security Council the gravity of the situation in Lebanon, transmits the communications that he has received, and offers his good offices. [UN Chronicle, Apr 1976 and Apr 1978]
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
<th>SG's Actions/Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4 Dec 1979</td>
<td>US Embassy in Tehran seized by revolutionary Islamic students on 4 Nov 1979, with support of Iran’s new government. On 9 Nov, after consultations, SC President called for the release of the hostages.</td>
<td>SG writes to SC President on 25 Nov drawing attention to the continuing crisis and requesting SC meeting, saying that it was his opinion that the crisis posed a threat to international peace and security. SC meets formally on 27 Nov. SG speaks first, calling upon the USA and Iran to exercise maximum restraint. In resolution of 4 Dec SC calls for release of hostages, restoration of diplomatic immunities and authorizes SG to “take all appropriate measures” to implement the resolution. On 31 Dec 1979 he travels to Tehran but his four-point proposal is rejected and he returns empty handed. [YUN 1979, pp. 307-312; S/13646]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26 Sep 1980</td>
<td>From mid-May to mid-Sep SG received accusations from both Iran &amp; Iraq, indicating a deteriorating situation. Iraq then invaded Iran on 22 Sep, beginning the Iran-Iraq war. SG appealed to both parties on 22 &amp; 23 Sep for restraint and a negotiated settlement.</td>
<td>SG states in letter to SC President (25 Sep), that fighting had intensified and that the situation undoubtedly threatened international peace &amp; security. SG suggests SC consultations. Mexico and Norway request formal meeting of SC. At meeting on 26 Sep, SG summarizes developments leading to the meeting. SC adopts resolution 479 (1980) calling for a cease-fire and urging parties to accept mediation or conciliation. [S/14196; YUN 1980, pp. 312-314]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 Aug 1989</td>
<td>Fighting in Lebanon escalated, especially in and around Beirut. There is danger of further involvement of outside parties.</td>
<td>In a letter to the SC President, the SG notes that violence in and around Beirut “had escalated to a level unprecedented in fourteen years of conflict.” He states his belief that an effective cease-fire is imperative: “in my opinion, the present crisis poses a serious threat to international peace and security. Accordingly, in the exercise of my responsibility under the Charter of the United Nations, I ask that the Security Council be convened urgently ...” [S/20789]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The first Secretary-General, Trygve Lie, never explicitly invoked Article 99 before the Security Council, which rapidly became a platform for Cold War oratory and rivalry soon after the
creation of the UN. Still, Lie set an important precedent by asserting his right to speak on his own initiative during Security Council debates (without being invited to speak by a Member State), acting in the spirit of independence of Article 99, even if he was not warning of new threats to the peace. In 1950, Lie did sound the alarm about a threat to the peace: the invasion of South Korea. He was the first to speak in the Council at the crucial meeting of 25 June, 1950, shortly after the North Korean attack, but since the Korea item was placed on the Council’s agenda by the US, which had called the urgent meeting, it was not a clear cut case of Article 99 invocation. In any case, Lie’s address was hardly even a “warning.” The massive invasion had begun over 12 hours earlier. Furthermore, Lie had learned about the attack from a US official, the US Assistant Secretary of State for International Organization, in a midnight call on June 24. After receiving confirmation from UN field observers in Korea, the Secretary-General did validate the allegations of aggression (a useful contribution in itself) and implored the Council to take action, which it did because the Soviet Union was absent and therefore unable to exercise its veto right.

It was only with the arrival of the proactive Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld that Article 99 was applied rigorously and vigorously. The most important case was in the Congo. In January 1960, Hammarskjöld made a tour of many African states, especially the newly emerging states. He personally found that the Congo, which was to receive its independence from Belgium a few months later, was ill-prepared for self-government. Furthermore, the UN’s Bureau of Technical Assistance Operations raised serious doubts about “the future of the new republic as an integrated nation.” Demonstrating his ability to “meet trouble half way,” he sent his capable Under-Secretary-General for Special Political Affairs, Ralph J. Bunche, to represent the UN at the Congolese independence ceremonies on June 30. Using intentionally vague wording, Hammarskjöld gave Bunche a broad mandate to “be available to the [Congolese government] for consultations and discussions on matters relating to the United Nations interest [and] to report directly to me, with such recommendations as you may consider suitable.”

Bunche cabled back his first-hand observations of the outbreak of violence almost immediately after the independence ceremonies—he himself had been held at gunpoint—and described his frequent discussions with the new government leaders. Thus, Hammarskjöld had an excellent source of on-site information. On July 12, when the Congolese leaders appealed to Hammarskjöld for UN military assistance, he was already familiar with the situation. He called an urgent meeting of the Security Council for 13 July 1960, where he described the country's descent into anarchy and presented his proposal. At the meeting, he said: “I believe the UN may be able to save this situation, chaotic as it is rapidly becoming.” The danger had broad, global implications since the superpowers supported opposing factions in the Congo and the country could easily have become a flash point for a larger conflict. At Hammarskjöld's recommendation, the Security Council created a peacekeeping force, called ONUC (Opération des Nations Unies au Congo) which played a difficult but stabilizing role over the next four years. Tragically, Hammarskjöld lost his life in a mysterious plane crash in 1961 while traveling in the region to resolve the conflict. His successor, U Thant of Burma, carried on the task of conflict resolution in an able manner and eventually was able to secure the withdrawal of the UN forces.

Secretary-General U Thant was a strong proponent and practitioner of “quiet diplomacy,” never invoking Article 99 explicitly. At times he was urged to do so by various governments and outside observers (e.g., in the Biafran/Nigeria conflict 1967-70), but he resisted because he felt
that matters should only be brought before the Council if subsequent agreement on actions was likely to be achieved, something which was not easy in the polarized Security Council of the Cold War. He insisted that “nothing could be more divisive or useless than for the Secretary-General to invoke Article 99 in a situation where there is no real possibility of the Security Council agreeing on any useful positive role.” Nevertheless, his sense of impatience with the Council grew steadily during the East Pakistan/Bangladesh conflict of 1971.

In the first part of 1971, the Secretary-General found himself limited to a humanitarian role after millions of refugees had fled to India from East Pakistan as a result of internal fighting. Neither India nor Pakistan (supported by the USSR and the US, respectively) wanted the UN to intervene politically, considering the matter an “internal affair.” But U Thant recognized the serious potential for international armed conflict and on July 20, in a private memorandum, he urged the Council to intervene, despite the slim chances that the Council would act. “The crisis is unfolding in the context of the long-standing, and unresolved, differences between India and Pakistan—differences which gave rise to open warfare only six years ago. … [A] major conflict in the subcontinent could all too easily expand … [T]he present situation [is] a potential threat to peace and security … It is for these reasons that I am taking the unusual step of reporting to the President of the Security Council on a question which has not been inscribed on the Council’s agenda.” A few weeks later, U Thant made this memorandum public after it had been ignored by Council members, as a means to further prod them. But the Council (led by the superpowers) continued to avoid dealing with the situation until the beginning of war in December 1971.

Perhaps the greatest failure and the greatest success in early warning took place during the tenure of Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali. In 1994, many signals of impending genocide were detected by UN peacekeepers in Rwanda, but they went unheeded by the UN Secretariat in New York and important avenues were left uninvestigated, leading to the UN's unpreparedness and helplessness in the face of the brutal nation-wide slaughter of over half a million people in about one hundred days. Some of the ignored signals in Rwanda are described later in this chapter and in the literature.

By contrast, the signals of danger in Macedonia were not ignored. Here, the main credit for sounding the alarm goes to the Republic's President, Kiro Gligorov. He raised the issue with the Secretary-General in the fall of 1992 and lobbied the Council's leading members to promote a proactive UN response. He successfully demonstrated that the new state, born in September 1991 out of the break up of the former Yugoslavia, was facing enormous internal and external threats. The country possessed a diverse ethnic mixture: three-fifths Macedonian, one-fifth Albanian, and the rest Turks, Greeks, Gypsies, Serbs, Vlachs, Muslim Slavs and Bulgarians. The land-locked nation of 2 million was “surrounded by countries with a historical claim to the territory, a political claim to protect an ethnic minority, or, in the case of Greece, a diplomatic claim to the very name Macedonia.” Should one neighbor intervene, others likely would follow, leading to a broader European war that could find NATO partners Greece and Turkey on opposite sides. The deployment of UN monitors along the Macedonian border served as a deterrent to aggression from the outside (especially from neighboring Serbia) and a stabilizer internally. The United Nations Preventive Deployment (UNPREDEP) force also served an early warning system in itself. The monitors could detect probing missions that would suggest preparations for a frontal attack, and could help the UN Secretary-General to sound the alarm, either through Article 99 or in a less dramatic fashion at an early stage by passing information to influential member states.
The main forum for conveying information is no longer the formal Security Council meetings but the informal consultations. There, the Secretary-General or his representative briefs Security Council members on a daily basis. These meetings, which are not public, are preferred by members because they permit a freer exchange of views, though the level of accountability is less.

Because the minutes of these meetings are confidential, it is difficult to judge how many (if any) early warnings have been made. Kofi Annan commented in 2001 that he had "never yet found it necessary" to invoke Article 99, presumably in the formal sense. But his spokesman revealed that in April 2001, Annan had asked for an informal meeting "under Article 99" to warn of an escalation of violence in the Middle East.

Though there have been few formal invocations of Article 99 before the Council, it is regularly used as the legislative base for a host of independent activities by the Secretary-General. Some of these activities are quite relevant to warning, such as monitoring and fact-finding. For instance, Secretary-General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar justified his independent investigations of Iraqi chemical weapons use in the 1980-88 Iran-Iraq war using the Article 99 authority. (He preferred not to use the more contentious General Assembly resolution A/37/98 because the vote on that resolution was far from unanimous.) Other activities are justified, in part, by Article 99 though they are only indirectly related to warning, for instance, "good offices" functions like mediation and conciliation. Dag Hammarskjold asserted that the “necessary implication” of Article 99 is “a broad discretion to conduct inquiries and to engage in informal diplomatic activity in regard to matters which may threaten the maintenance of international peace and security.”

Over the past fifty years, a succession of UN Secretaries-General have applied Article 99 to enhance the powers, stature and authority of the office. Thus, its value in practice has gone far beyond warning. However, its original intent remains: to alert the Council to emerging threats to the peace. At the end of the Cold War, this role has again become the focus of attention on the part of governments and academics, under the concept of “early warning.”
The definition of early warning is the subject of debate among academics and practitioners. In connection with the prevention of armed conflict, the following definition is suggested:

Early warning is the act of alerting a recognized authority (such as the UN Security Council) to a new (or renewed) threat to the peace at a sufficiently early stage for that authority to attempt preventive action.

By this definition, early warning by the Secretary-General need not necessarily involve going before the Security Council. Warnings can also be made before other bodies such as the General Assembly or one of the UN’s committees or commissions, or even to selected governments in private or public.

What constitutes “early”? The practical answer follows from the definition: in time to make an effort at conflict prevention. If there is not sufficient time to take potentially preventive action, then the term “late warning” is appropriate. If the conflict is already rapidly escalating, the term “warning” may not even be applicable at all. For conflict prevention and preparedness, early warning should be done as far in advance as possible. However, it is harder to make accurate predictions over the long range and states are unlikely to respond to an early warning unless it is convincing as well as alarming. Thus, the character of an early warning can be measured on the scales of time (how early the warning), intensity (how strong the warning) and level of confidence (how accurate the warning). A balance point has to be reached in practice between these. A warning issued too early risks being inaccurate. A warning that is too calamitous risks being dismissed outright. A desirable early warning period for most conflicts would be one to six months, although long-range or “strategic” early warning can be done years in advance. (This was the case for Kosovo, for which there was warning almost a decade before the rapid escalation in violence in 1998 that finally seized the attention of the international community and brought about international intervention.)

Early warning can best be illustrated in relation to a generalized conflict, with its escalation, crisis and descending phase as shown in Figure 1. Usually, the Secretary-General intervenes in a conflict only after it has escalated, and a large number of lives have been lost. In current thinking and current efforts more emphasis is, fortunately, being placed on prevention and, hence, early warning has taken on new importance. Early warning is an activity that is done in advance of a steep escalation of conflict. It involves continuous monitoring of potential conflict areas and a process for the continual updating of risk assessments.

Figure 14.1: The three stages of conflict (simplified) and the corresponding UN roles.
Even if early warning fails to produce a response and the conflict escalates, early information gathering should help the Secretary-General and his staff to be more effective in the later stages of the conflict, which are also illustrated in Figure 14.1, as crisis management, conflict resolution and peace-building. Before the conflict begins or escalates, the UN could and should exercise its powers of prevention, through diplomacy or preventive deployment. If escalation is probable, the Secretary-General or a field mission has a duty to issue an early warning to a larger body. In the second stage of conflict, as fighting is occurring, the UN takes on a conflict/crisis management role. Finally, when parties are ready to reach a negotiated settlement, the UN works for conflict resolution and post-conflict peacebuilding. Thus, information-gathering and analysis for early warning should be seen in the spectrum of the Secretary-General's roles and needs. Because there is so much overlap in the information requirements, it would be efficient to make early warning just one part of a larger information/intelligence capacity under the Secretary-General.

A review of the conflicts in which the Secretary-General has intervened shows that in the first fifty years of the UN, the fraction of formal early warning cases before the Security Council was quite small: fewer than one in twenty. In addition to the early warning examples mentioned – the Congo (1960), East Pakistan/Bangladesh (1971) and Macedonia (1992) – one can add the notable case of Bahrain (1970), which also presents a good example of preventive action. (Bahrain gained its independence from Iran without bloodshed after the Secretary-General sent a mission to determine the wishes of the people of Bahrain.) In recent history, the record is not much improved. The record shows that early warning is not a frequent activity of the UN Secretary-General, despite his Charter mandate. What, then, are the difficulties associated with early warning and how can the possibilities for early warning be improved? Especially after the Cold War, one would expect that an expansion of the Secretary-General's role in this area would be both desirable and possible.

OLD CONSTRAINTS AND NEW OPPORTUNITIES

The dilemma faced by a Secretary-General in warning of a new threat to the peace is much like that faced by a person wondering whether to pull a fire alarm or shout “fire!” As the signs of
fire appear, a number of people are usually in a position to sound the alarm or warn of the possibility. In the UN, member states also have the right to bring new threats to the attention of the Council. To sound the alarm, the Secretary-General must either have new and unique information on the danger or, once the danger is seen by several actors, he must be bold enough to choose to act quickly. The two main reasons for the dearth of warnings from the Secretary-General are pinpointed in this analogy. He rarely has more information than the most powerful members of the UN (or states closest to the conflict) and, when a conflict becomes obvious, he often prefers that states take the initiative in sounding the alarm because they will then be more motivated to mount a response. This does not mean that his early warning role is unimportant, but rather it shows that it can be difficult to implement.

The difficulties in obtaining unique information and fostering political will are illustrated by two historical cases. In Korea (1950), the Secretary-General received the initial information about the invasion from the US, and so from the beginning he was behind in knowing about events in the field. Even the UN Commission on Korea (UNCOK), stationed in Korea, drew most of its information from US diplomatic and military staff in the country. When he was originally informed of the invasion, the Secretary-General did offer to invoke Article 99 but he was told that the US itself was planning to call an urgent meeting of the Security Council.

In the East Pakistan/Bangladesh conflict (1971), the Secretary-General, after waiting months for states to raise the issue in the Council tried to push the Council into deliberation. He did not want to call a formal meeting of the Council but rather sought to “nudge” the Council towards deliberations and action. There was, however, no political will in the Council to initiate discussions until the war broke out some five months later. In the case of Korea, the Secretary-General was limited by a lack of early information. Whereas in the case of East Pakistan/Bangladesh, it was the lack of political will (on the part of the Council members) that inhibited the Secretary-General from invoking Article 99.

Knowing that the keys to early warning are good information and strong political will, we can identify various means to improve the UN's early warning system. It is apparent that the information should be clear and convincing in identifying an emerging threat. This entails not only the gathering of much information from the field but also a substantial means for thorough analysis. Within the UN there must also be a consultation process to consider the results of such analysis and a means to move critical information quickly “up the ladder” to the Secretary-General and on to the Security Council. In addition to sharing information with the information to Council members, it may also be necessary to disseminate further in order to promote action. Given the three steps of information gathering, analysis and dissemination, what can be done for effective early warning in each step?

**Information Gathering**

How does the Secretary-General obtain current news about emerging crises? Consider the UN's main information sources: members states, UN agencies/personnel, the media and non-governmental organizations. Some of the advantages and disadvantages of each source are summarized in Table 14.2.
**Table 14.2:** UN information sources and their advantages and disadvantages for UN early warning and conflict management.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Advantages</th>
<th>Disadvantages</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Governments</td>
<td>- governments (esp. Western) have wide information networks (e.g., embassies, agencies) and a moral responsibility to provide information for prevention &lt;br&gt;- governments that are party to conflicts often have specific information not available elsewhere; they are the most interested in providing early warning of threats by adversaries &lt;br&gt;- important for UN to be aware of degree of government knowledge since governments are key actors (e.g., to lead or approve UN actions) &lt;br&gt;- no financial cost to receive such info. (though sometimes information must be bartered).</td>
<td>- national bias and self-interest  &lt;br&gt;- dominance of Western intelligence capabilities &lt;br&gt;- incomplete and selective info provided (on a “national interest” and “need to know” basis) &lt;br&gt;- often only analyses are provided without raw data or vice-versa &lt;br&gt;- constraints placed by governments on UN use and dissemination of information provided (e.g., to avoid compromising intelligence sources) &lt;br&gt;- UN may be accused of being used by intelligence agencies or of partiality to the governments providing information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Media</td>
<td>- wide-scope  &lt;br&gt;- easily obtained  &lt;br&gt;- usually up-to-date about violent events (but poor on early warning before violence)  &lt;br&gt;- usually extra information is easily obtained from journalists (but who might expect to be returned the favor)  &lt;br&gt;- small financial cost</td>
<td>- sensationalistic and/or nationalistic approach  &lt;br&gt;- media bias (e.g., toward the underdog and towards publisher preference)  &lt;br&gt;- government and political party control of media  &lt;br&gt;- wide range of quality  &lt;br&gt;- danger that information is factually incorrect (due to rush deadlines and heavy dependence on oral interviews)  &lt;br&gt;- lack of deep analysis  &lt;br&gt;- Western (esp. US) media dominance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UN Personnel On-site (e.g., UN agencies/offices, information centres, peacekeeping operations, fact-finding missions)</td>
<td>- first-hand observation, close physical proximity  &lt;br&gt;- generally, more objective than above sources, but usually more cautious  &lt;br&gt;- maintain direct communications with locals and with UN headquarters  &lt;br&gt;- often meet directly with protagonists  &lt;br&gt;- are tasked to serve UN system goals  &lt;br&gt;- may be directed to collect specific information</td>
<td>- may overextend capacity and mandate of the UN field offices  &lt;br&gt;- is dependent on consent and cooperation of the host state and local authorities  &lt;br&gt;- may displease host state, which might accuse UN of spying and expel personnel  &lt;br&gt;- may compromise other functions (e.g., development work, UN publicity)  &lt;br&gt;- bias may arise because of national or other loyalties of UN personnel (esp. local staff)  &lt;br&gt;- requires caution to avoid accepting staged events  &lt;br&gt;- may be dangerous for personnel</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Regional Organizations (e.g., OSCE, OAU)  
- proximity of RO to conflicts may yield more direct information  
- RO may provide historical background and regional views  
- easier to send observers to nearby area of conflict  
- RO may be poorly equipped and inexperienced  
- domination by regional powers may bias information  
- confusion may arise in sharing of responsibilities with UN

NGOs and Individuals (e.g., humanitarian aid organizations, local population)  
- generally less biased (e.g., motivated by humanitarian concerns)  
- inside sources and grass-roots contacts  
- less sensitive to criticism, especially from governments  
- locals may be best sources of info on the capabilities and intent on conflicting parties  
- danger of lack of professionalism and accountability  
- members states may protest to UN about its cooperation or reliance on non-state actors

Observation technologies (e.g., aerial/satellite and ground-based systems)  
- mechanized/computerized systems reduce requirements for on-site personnel and increase efficiency and scope of surveillance  
- aerial/satellite: possibility for both wide-scan of territory and target-specific information  
- less intrusive than humans (esp. satellites)  
- less risk to human life than on-site observers in hazardous zones  
- expensive, with limited choice of providers (mostly Western)  
- susceptible to deception and destruction  
- danger of over-reliance  
- aerial/ground sensors: permission required to enter national airspace or territory (though not for satellites)  
- aerial/satellite: difficulty to see inside buildings or underground; weather dependent  
- machine maintenance may be required  
- need for professional image/information interpretation and analysis

Selected historical incidents illustrate the practical problems and opportunities for the UN with each source. For instance, it is revealing to find out how the Secretaries-General first learned about major outbreaks of conflicts.

Traditionally, governments have been the chief source of warnings and early information. Sometimes it is even the “guilty” governments themselves who tell the UN Secretary-General about their own aggressive actions, justifying themselves, though more often governments provide information on the actions of other states (in condemnation). In 1948, Trygve Lie learned that Arab states had attacked Israel (15 May 1948) through a cablegram from the Egyptian government to the Security Council President. As previously noted, Lie first heard about the North Korean invasion (25 June 1950) in a mid-night call from a senior US State Department official. Dag Hammarskjold received allegations of a Vietnamese attack on Laos in a cable from the Laotian foreign minister (4 September 1959), who apparently magnified the threat. U Thant was informed by the US State Department about the presence of Soviet nuclear missiles in Cuba (20 October 1962) two days before Kennedy’s public announcement of the threat. Pérez de Cuéllar learned of the US-led attack on Iraq in a call from President Bush an hour or so before the bombing began (17 January 1991).
UN officials stationed in the field can be the conveyors of important and dramatic news to headquarters. They are generally the most objective sources, though they are limited in what they can observe, anticipate and report. The start of the Six-Day War (5 June 1967) was conveyed to UN headquarters at 3 am by the commander of UN Emergency Force (UNEF), the peacekeeping force in the region, prompting Under-Secretary-General Ralph Bunche to awaken U Thant at home.30 Similarly, in 1973 UN observers stationed near the Suez Canal, whose positions had just been overrun by Egyptian forces, informed Kurt Waldheim (6 October 1973) of the start of the Yom Kippur War.31

The news media is sometimes ahead of diplomatic and internal channels. Lie learned of the Communist coup in Czechoslovakia (22 Feb 1948) in a newscast on his car radio.32 U Thant learned of the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia (20 Aug 1968) on a radio newscast carrying the Soviet Government’s announcement of such.33 He learned of the proclamation of independence of Bangladesh, and the ensuing violence (26 March 1971) in a report of the Indian News Agency (monitored by the UN's Office of Public Information) which, in turn, cited the Voice of the Free Bangladesh Radio.

UN field offices routinely forward local press reports to UN headquarters but these stories have usually focused on how the UN itself was being covered. Realizing that UN personnel stationed in over one hundred countries at offices of the UN Information Centres (UNICs) and UN Development Programme (UNDP) were an untapped source of early warning information, Secretary-General Pérez de Cuéllar requested “the heads of the UN agencies and field offices throughout the world to inform him, on an urgent basis, of any situation that could give rise to a major humanitarian crisis.”34 The Office for Research and the Collection of Information (ORCI), which had an early warning mandate during its five-year existence from 1987-1992, requested the UNICs “to supply the office with all relevant, new and reliable information relating to ‘political developments’ in the region they cover.” Information was to be based on “official documents and comments, press analyses, and reports available in the country or countries served by each Centre.”35

With the advent of the “information age,” there are many new possibilities for information gathering which are just beginning to be explored by the UN. Most of these arise from the rapid progress in technological innovation. Computer databases, electronic communications and the Internet provide a tremendous boost to the capacity to gather, share and store information. Internet searches and electronic news services (the UN relies heavily on NewsEdge36) help the UN to gather an unprecedented amount of information in near real time.

An increasing number of states and even private companies are gaining access to reconnaissance satellites, which operate above the boundaries of national sovereignty and which can potentially observe all countries of the world. The images obtained from advanced reconnaissance satellites are of sufficiently high resolution to count people in an open market place even at night (using radar). At present, however, the UN does not have automatic access to satellite imagery. A priority should be to obtain regular, if not continuous, access to satellite imagery possessed by member states or purchased from private sources. There are not, at present, any agreements for the automatic transfer of national satellite information--or any sensitive information for that matter--to the UN and only vague responsibilities are recognized by Member States. These responsibilities should be formalized in one or more information-sharing agreements to help the UN better anticipate conflicts.
Aerial reconnaissance can be an invaluable form of observation. Overflying vast tracts of land, planes with high-resolution cameras can record and transmit detailed images for photo-interpretation back to mission headquarters, even in real time (i.e., as they are being taken). Flights can be timed with ground patrols to uncover smugglers, sanctions busters and treaty violations. For border patrols, planes flying on one side of the border can view at least 30-40 km into the opposing territory, which can help identify any threatening troop concentrations.

Perhaps it is time to re-examine President Dwight Eisenhower’s 1960 proposal for a “UN aerial reconnaissance capability [...] to detect preparations for attack” to operate “in the territories of all nations prepared to accept such inspection.” The US President had generously offered to provide planes and equipment to the UN, as well as to accept observation on US territory. While such openness and magnanimity towards the UN is unlikely from the US today, it might be possible for a group of nations to commit themselves to such global confidence-building.

Ground-based technologies are desperately needed to assist the UN in its field missions with early warning. UN forces would benefit from night vision devices, which allow peacekeepers to patrol better at night, and various types of sensors and detectors, including ground sensors and radar to spot approaching vehicles and amassing forces. The NATO forces that replaced those of the UN in the former Yugoslavia were equipped with many advanced technologies, illustrating how, by NATO standards at least, the UN is greatly under-equipped. Historically, in many of the UN’s field operations, the most advanced observation device employed was the “human eyeball,” sometimes aided by binoculars.

Information gained by observation technologies (satellite, aerial or ground-based) may not be enough to reveal the hidden intentions of leaders. Often the only people to know about a planned escalation of conflict are the plotters (or the “spoilers” of a peace process) and their associates. In the past, key “insiders” in this group have sought to warn the UN, placing themselves at great risk. For instance, in Rwanda in early 1994, several months before the world witnessed the most intense genocide since World War II, the UN peacekeeping force stationed there (UNAMIR) received information from a Rwandan militia leader that a group of high-ranking Hutus within the government were planning the mass slaughter of Tutsis. The UN Force Commander, Maj. Gen. Romeo Dallaire of Canada, requested permission from UN headquarters to provide asylum to the informer and his family. Having no system to directly handle asylum seekers, headquarters turned down the request and didn’t aid Dallaire in securing asylum from some third country. Three months later the macabre plot was executed virtually as planned, with the systematic killings quickly escalating beyond international control and beyond international comprehension. A key element in the extremists’ plot was to force Belgian peacekeepers to leave the country at the outset of the slaughter since these troops were the best equipped peacekeepers in the country and the only ones potentially capable of putting a forceful stop to the spread of genocide. So troops from the Rwandan Presidential Guard confronted a group of ten Belgian paratroopers and requested them to lay down their arms. Not knowing of the specific plot, the peacekeepers innocently complied, only to be slaughtered. An outraged Belgium withdrew the rest of its peacekeepers shortly thereafter, just as the coup plotters had desired. During the subsequent genocide, the unprepared UN Force Commander complained about being “deaf and blind” in the field. This shows that more and better information is essential an early stage to anticipate the outbreak, escalation and continuation of conflict. It also shows that a mechanism (using the help of national...
Governments should be developed to grant rapid asylum to those who put their lives at risk when they have vital information relating to early warning and crisis management.

Obtaining information directly from local persons and organizations who observe or are affected by menacing developments is key to a successful early warning system. In addition to face-to-face meetings, electronic mail and the Internet, increasingly available throughout the world, have the potential for easy, cheap, rapid and widespread communication between individuals and the UN. The UN has already established a 24-hour human rights “fax hotline” in Geneva to receive complaints from individuals. In Rwanda, the fax machine at the Mille Colline Hotel was employed continuously by the Hotel manager (who was Hutu) to inform the world about the genocide of Tutsis. By providing an e-mail address for receipt of similar information, the UN could receive even more warnings and vital information. While e-mail and, indeed, long distance calling/faxing, may not yet be available to many potential “warners” in the developing world, its availability is bound to increase in coming years. With both the Internet and the telephone, however, there remain the challenges of ensuring confidentiality, both during transmission and after reception, and of sorting out valid information from false alarms.

The Internet now serves as an unprecedented source of background information on the widest possible range of topics, many of which can be useful in learning details about conflicts, current and emerging. The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (formerly the Department of Humanitarian Affairs) has established Internet sites for information-sharing on areas of conflict, of which ReliefWeb is an excellent example. This publicly-accessible store of information (available at www.reliefweb.int and www.irinnews.org) covers current natural and man-made disasters and also has useful archives. For non-UN field workers, activists and researchers it is a valuable and unique source of information because it contains some of the daily/weekly field reports from UN agencies and NGOs. It also contains a wide range of NGO field reports and media articles, including analyses directly critical of governments and NGO information that cannot be produced by the UN for technical and political reasons.

Human rights abuses are important indicators of emerging or escalating conflict. The UN Commission on Human Rights has a mandate for global monitoring of human rights. Its special rapporteurs conduct in-depth investigations of human rights abuses, though they are often denied entry into an accused state. The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights has among his/her functions “prevention and early warning.” In 1994 a 24-hour hot line was established to “allow the United Nations Centre for Human Rights in Geneva to monitor and react rapidly to human rights emergencies, such as the 1994 crisis in Rwanda.” Input is solicited from victims, their relatives and NGOs to initiate “urgent, potentially life-saving contact” with the Special Procedures Branch of the Centre. The hotline and database are designed to improve the “timely flow of information from and to special rapporteurs from anywhere in the world,” and form the basis of an electronic network linking people around the globe. Several excellent UN human rights NGOs (such as Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch) can gather useful information that is not available to governmental bodies.

Information Analysis

The amount of information pouring into the UN Secretariat, including both legitimate and false alarms, can be overwhelming. It leads to the concomitant problems of “information overload
and under-use." In order to make early warnings, the UN needs a sophisticated analytical capacity to extract the most important information. Thorough analysis of incoming information is necessary to spot trends, to corroborate or discard alarming reports and to identify information deficiencies. This analysis is an extremely important part of the feedback loop between headquarters and the information gatherers in the field.

Early warning is more easily achieved when specific information is targeted and deliberately sought out, based usually on “leads” provided in the general information-gathering process. Those who plot an escalation of violence usually try to hide their plans and preparations. Hence, early warning may require keen “detective work” to uncover even the general nature of such plots. Two important indicators are the importation of armaments (usually done secretly and illegally) and the control over resources (e.g., mining activities or the drug trade). The UN has traditionally had a poor monitoring system for such indicators, perhaps reflecting its fear of infringing on “internal affairs” of states but this has begun to change. It is important to identify the vested economic interests both within and outside the country. The UN had its first experience with this in its Congo mission (1960-64), where it was vital for the UN to know the policies of the mining firms that backed Katangese secession. Beginning in the late 1990s, the UN grew more bold. It began a series of studies on the Congo, Angola and West Africa that have broken new ground in identifying companies and “naming and shaming” individuals that were alleged to have broken Security Council sanctions.

In order to practice early warning and contingency planning, the UN needs to engage in scenario-building. This means continually developing scenarios to cover potential outcomes for both international and internal situations in the short- and long-term. Most armies have contingency plans for all manner of threats, from conventional wars to a nuclear holocaust, so it is only reasonable that the UN should develop contingency plans to respond to smaller set of armed conflicts. Unfortunately, the UN has not yet developed a system for scenario-building. Now that the need for greater emphasis on conflict prevention is recognized by nations, at least in their rhetoric, it is natural for the UN to start to develop realistic mechanisms. Analysis is needed not only to spot negative developments but also to identify positive developments to be reinforced.

An analytical capacity, of the type needed for early warning, briefly existed in the Information and Research (I&R) Unit of the Situation Centre, which was part of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO). Though small, with only four officers, it had the greatest “reach” in terms of information gathering and analysis because these four officers were “connected” to national intelligence systems, having been seconded from them. Created in 1994 with only a US intelligence officer, the unit soon acquired officers from four of the five members of the Security Council (France, Russia, UK in addition to the USA). Their work was not limited to peacekeeping operations. They regularly provided assistance to other departments and to the Office of the Secretary-General. They produced important information/intelligence reports that went well beyond the scope of regular UN reports. For instance, they included information on arms flows and other covert assistance from States. They evaluated the motivations of parties, and even began to develop threat assessments and other forecasts. Unfortunately, the I&R unit was dissolved after the General Assembly, at the urging of a group of countries from the developing world, required the UN Secretariat to discontinue the use of gratis officers, who were mostly from the developed world which alone could afford to pay their salaries. This was a setback for the ongoing efforts to create an analytical capability for early warning within the UN. Yet, the I&R Unit
model can still serve as a useful prototype, provided the UN retains an institutional memory about the unit.

Current Shared Responsibilities for Early Warning

Before information reaches the Secretary-General, it is usually received and “processed” by personnel in the Secretariat, including his Executive Office. Though the Secretary-General is sometimes informed by government representatives directly, the general flow of information on new developments is from the desk officer, who usually specializes in several countries in a given region, to the division head to the Under-Secretary-General, to the Secretary-General and, in most cases, his Executive Committee on Peace and Security. (For more on the various Executive Committees, see Chapter by Duggan.)

Several departments within the Secretariat currently have responsibilities for early warning, as do the various human rights bodies mentioned above. The Department of Political Affairs (DPA) has “primary responsibility” within the UN Secretariat for preventive action and peacemaking. This includes a mandate “to identify potential or actual conflicts in whose resolution the United Nations could play a useful role.” The regional divisions within DPA are each charged with identifying “potential crisis areas and providing early warning to the Secretary-General on developments and situations affecting peace and security.” In 1998 a Prevention Team was established within DPA to review each month an emerging conflict that might call for preventive measures. For this purpose, each DPA division produces "prevention papers", with specific cases offered for consideration.

Another indication of the growing interest and commitment to early warning is the project, begun in 1998 under DPA, on “Early Warning and Preventive Measures: Building UN Capacity.” Since this project is described in greater detail by other contributors to this volume (see chapter by Dufresne and Schnabel) it is not covered here. It is, nonetheless, an important long-term staff-training initiative to create an enduring institutional capacity for early warning and prevention.

One of the earlier and ambitious early warning systems established was the Humanitarian Early Warning System (HEWS) of OCHA. It involved a few (three or four) professional staff members and a significant computerized capacity. The system incorporated a multitude of indicators and information sources (statistical and textual) to allow monitoring of possible deterioration in over 100 nations. However, the system was not able to produce a single “early warning” of armed conflict, though it had operated for several years (since July 1995). The initial efforts were deficient in that too much reliance was placed on statistics, computer databases, neural networks and automated computations for pattern recognition without linking this to more practical human analysis. In colloquial terms, HEWS relied too much on a “black box” approach when a more “hands on” proactive approach, guided by human experience, intuition and curiosity, was needed.

It is generally recognized that different sections of the UN, as with many large bureaucracies, lacked effective coordination and information flow. In order to address this problem within the Secretariat, an OCHA/DPA/DPKO Framework for Coordination was developed after the creation of the Department for Humanitarian Affairs (DHA, now renamed Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, OCHA) in 1992. This Framework expanded over time to include representatives from the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and other UN agencies.
(UNICEF, UNHCR, WHO, WFP, FAO and the World Bank). One goal is “joint analysis of early warning of a looming crisis, within a broader framework for the coordination of operational planning and implementation.” This includes “early warning information gathering and analysis, planning of preventive action, fact-finding, etc.” Desk officers are to exchange “early warning signals, staff reports, internal meeting notes, maps, assessments, agency situation reports, etc.” An interdepartmental committee meets regularly to facilitate the Framework for Coordination, to prioritize countries for review, decide on further monitoring measures and, finally to make recommendations to the Secretary-General’s Executive Committees on Peace and Security and on Humanitarian Affairs. There is said to be “agreement as to the responsibility and criteria for ‘sounding the alarm’ in impending crises.” Even still, participants are hard pressed to describe any success stories achieved to date.

An earlier manifestation of inter-agency level coordination was the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC), which held Consultations between 1992 and 1996 on “Early Warning of New Flows of Refugees and Displaced Persons.” The Consultations, conducted with varying regularity (e.g., monthly), were organized and chaired by DHA/OCHA and included many UN agencies (FAO, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNDP, UNEP, UNESCO, WHO, WFP, IOM), UN Secretariat sections (e.g., DPA and the Centre for Human Rights Affairs), as well as the ICRC as an observer. Consensual reports from the meetings were prepared for the executive heads of the agencies and offices represented, as well as the Executive Office of the Secretary-General. In these reports, short lists of cases of urgent situations that might give rise to new flows were presented along with possible preventive/preparative measures to be taken by the Secretary-General or other high officials. The Ad Hoc Working Group has also collaborated with the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC), which was also given an early warning role. The IASC usually develops the terms of reference for inter-agency appeals for international support in response to a natural or man-made disaster. So far, it has confined itself almost entirely to disasters that have already occurred, not complex emergencies that are forecast.

**Dissemination and the Political Will of Member States**

One of the first UN early warning bodies, the Ad Hoc Working Group on Early Warning of Refugee Flows, made an important observation that remains applicable today. It complained that warnings are all to often not acted upon or even not considered:

The effectiveness of the Ad Hoc Working Group’s access to the executive level has, regrettably, remained a serious concern of every participant. While the reports of the Consultations on Early Warning reach the offices of executive heads, there is uncertainty as to whether the message contained in these brief alerts is received and acted upon. Everybody is aware of the information-overload problem of senior managers and of the self-evident need of senior officials to attend to the pressing issues of the moment. Still, if the costs in human lives and resources of today’s megacrisis are to be lowered markedly, the current neglect of early warnings for preventive purposes must be reversed. This problem goes even higher up the ladder. The Secretaries-General have complained for decades about the lack of interest displayed by member states in receiving specific early warnings.
In principle, governments support an expanded early warning role for the Secretary-General. The Security Council and the General Assembly have passed several resolutions to promote early warning and have even encouraged the Secretary-General to employ Article 99. For instance, they did so in relation to the Secretary-General’s 1992 Agenda for Peace and several times since then.\textsuperscript{50} The General Assembly did so in its resolutions on the “Protection and Security of Small States,”\textsuperscript{51} and through various declarations it has approved.\textsuperscript{52} In the 1992 Declaration on UN Fact-finding, the General Assembly endorsed an even expanded mandate:

The Secretary-General should monitor the state of international peace and security \textit{regularly and systematically} in order to provide early warning of disputes or situations which might threaten international peace and security. The Secretary-General may bring relevant information to the attention of the Security Council and, where appropriate, of the General Assembly. [emphasis added]

Unfortunately, a regular and systematic global forecasting system, producing periodic reports on potential or actual threats to the peace, has not yet been created.

The crux of the problem for early warning and Article 99 invocations has been that the major powers will themselves alert the Security Council to threats to the peace if and when they see the need; if they do not bring up such matters up, it usually means that they do not want them brought up. If the Secretary-General “forces” the matter on the agenda of the Council by invoking Article 99, he risks raising the ire of one or more members of the Council. He may be dissuaded in advance or may simply fear that there will be little action in response to his pleas, since the Council members have already decided not to handle the matter. The only times when the Secretary-General can claim special privilege is when he possesses unique information, not available to the major powers, which can galvanize the Council to action. But it is rare that the Secretary-General will know more about a new dispute than the major powers.

The “solution” to this political problem is to develop a new norm or standard for early warning, in which the Secretary-General regularly draws attention to potential conflict at an early stage despite any reluctance of members of the Council. Such systematic action would be a natural exercise of Article 99. It has even been requested and encouraged by UN Member States (e.g., in the 1992 UN Fact-Finding Declaration cited above). But such early warning requires a bold, proactive approach on the part of the Secretary-General, even when a UN response is not immediately possible. It also requires that the current early warning system be augmented, so that better information and analysis is available to the Secretary-General. A number of possible avenues for improvement are presented in the next section.

Some of the “old constraints and new opportunities” for early warning are summarized in Table 14.3. Recent breakthroughs in information gathering, analysis and dissemination have been possible, thanks mostly to the rapid increase in computing power and the widening availability of the Internet. Still, this increase in information collection and handling has not yet resulted in a functioning early warning (EW) system for armed conflict. Unfortunately, no unit within the UN Secretariat, including the office of the Secretary-General, has yet produced a series of public early warnings about impending conflicts. While the UN is not expected to match the major powers in the ability to gather and process information about impending threats, in order to do early warning, its capabilities need to be substantially increased.
Table 14.3: Old constraints and new opportunities in early warning and information management.

<table>
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<th>Activity</th>
<th>Old Constraints</th>
<th>New Opportunities</th>
</tr>
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| Information-Gathering | - questionable accuracy and usual biases of many information sources (e.g., governments, media, NGOs)  
- needs for UN to avoid undue infringement in internal affairs, to keep “clean hands”  
- on-site presence requires consent of host state and often local authorities  
- potential threat to safety of observers (e.g., apprehension, physical security)  
- the “darkest” plans are kept secret  
- limited budgets to explore and expand UN capabilities | - Ever expanding Internet increases accessibility, scope and depth of information; decreasing cost, faster retrieval  
- longer history of event recording allows pattern recognition  
- digital archiving allows UN's historical records to be accessed easier and quicker  
- new and improved communications technologies (e.g., e-mail) allow more information to be sent faster and easier by more people  
- better observation technologies (e.g., aerial reconnaissance, commercial satellites with resolution better than one metre, improved ground sensors)  
- computerized databases used for better information storage  
- greater willingness of intelligence agencies to share information with UN |
| Analysis   | - time consuming, mentally intensive  
- intentions are hard to guess  
- new personnel required (desk-officers already overloaded)  
- predicting future can be hazardous: risk of errors (e.g., “crying wolf”) and being shown wrong  
- need to follow leads, to find corroborating information and give constant feedback to info. providers  
- information overload and under-use | - computerized databases for information management, computer forecasting, better graphics for visualization/presentation  
- technologies allow improved communications between information providers and analysts (testing ideas, soliciting views, gaining feedback)  
- greater willingness of intelligence agencies to share their analysis with UN  
- increased use of outside contractors, civil society and universities for analysis |
| Dissemination | - risk of breaching confidentiality of sensitive information (e.g., revealing and compromising information sources/methods)  
- creates pressure, often unwanted, on states to respond to new threats  
- may cause international embarrassment if no UN response is forthcoming; if a predicted disaster becomes reality then UN is seen to have failed at prevention  
- if preventive action is successful, the | - new means of dissemination to the public (e.g., through Internet) and within UN (local area networks)  
- new and expanded roles of SG at end of Cold War (e.g., good offices, multidimensional peacekeeping) brings new authority for proactive work, new response, especially possibilities for preventive deployment  
- Security Council response more likely than during Cold War |
accuracy of the predicted threat may be questioned - greater awareness of need for early warning and preventive action - opportunity to set a new norm for “regular and systematic” early warning

RECOMMENDATIONS: TOWARD AN EFFECTIVE UN EARLY WARNING SYSTEM

The constraints on developing UN early warning systems have been financial and managerial, as well as political and technical. The 1990s were characterized by deep financial cuts, loss of posts and institutional retrenchment. Still, with the UN reform process being constantly pushed, there is reason to hope that an effective early warning system, perhaps through the Framework for Coordination process, can become part of effective conflict prevention and preparedness within the UN system. The following recommendations (in italics) and the associated commentaries suggest ways to build a strong UN early warning system. The proposals can conveniently be divided into those dealing with organizational aspects, information-gathering, analysis and dissemination.

Organization of Early Warning

*A single body should be designated with overall responsibility for early warning (EW), including the coordination of an early warning system. This EW unit should be accountable for failures at early warning.*

Currently, the responsibility for early warning is spread among several departments and agencies. While many units should continue to provide early warnings, one body should be held accountable and act as the coordinator or administrator of the early warning system. In a distributed system without a central authority it is much easier for any part to ignore its small share of responsibility and to evade the risks of issuing early warnings. What is needed is a central unit, composed of UN officials dedicated solely to EW, that will provide coordination and follow-up. This unit should also be held accountable for any lapses, in order to encourage a learning process. While early warning should continue to be included in the mandates of various departments and agencies, one person (e.g., the unit chief) should be given the primary responsibility and the coordinating role for early warning. This will put the onus on that person/unit to collect and produce early warnings. The unit should be accountable for both missed opportunities and for false alarms, though it should be understood from above that early warning is not an easy task. It is also difficult to measure successful early warning since effective prevention tends to erase the evidence of its success (as not conflict erupted). Still, it should be possible to establish a track record for early warning through a rigorous analysis. This combination of responsibility, accountability and learning for early warning has never before been institutionalized in the UN.
Since early warning is just one part of the information continuum (which extends from the beginning to the end of a conflict and beyond, as indicated in Figure 1), the EW unit could be part of a larger information management body in the Secretariat (see subsequent recommendations). The Brahimi report of 1999 has proposed the creation of an Information and Strategic Analysis Secretariat (EISAS) to support the needs of the Secretary-General and his Executive Committee on Peace and Security (ECPS). Among its many functions, the ISAS would “bring budding crises to the attention of the ECPS leadership.” It would maintain databases and geographical information systems, generate policy analyses and formulate long-term strategies for the ECPS. The Brahimi panel recognized as a basic premise “the need to have more effective collection and assessment of information at United Nations headquarters, including an enhanced conflict early warning system that can detect and recognize the threat or risk of conflict or genocide.”

A learning mechanism should be part of the early warning system.

Failures to issue early warnings, which can be expected to be frequent, should be reviewed in order to determine if there are deficiencies in the system, improvements to be made and, more generally, lessons to be learned. In this way, the early warning system and individuals involved should “learn from experience” over time.

The officer in charge of early warning should NOT be responsible for proposing response options, though s/he may contribute to this important task. This overall responsibility for preventive action should be held by a different body.

Imposing a requirement that the early warning coordinator or unit also recommend potential responses to looming threats will slow down, or make impossible, the early warning process. While such recommendations can be attached to the warning, the “early warners” should be unencumbered from that obligation. Their warning should, however, provide an analysis of the threat with as much information as possible that could be useful in the consideration of responses. By listing possible “accelerators” and “decelerators” of future conflict, the early warners can contribute to the development of preventive actions.

More broadly, the UN should consider the creation an Information and Analysis Centre or Unit with a responsibility for handling information at all stages of the conflict, from prior to escalation (leading to early warnings) to the post-conflict peace-building stage. Early warning could be one important task of such a body.

This integrated approach, which was adopted in the Brahimi report, has much to commend it. It would allow for information gathering through the life cycle of a conflict and across the military/civilian divide. This will help smooth the transition between early warning and peacekeeping and post-conflict peacebuilding. There is a strong need for a body within the Secretariat that would be dedicated to information gathering and analysis. In the past, a number of large peacekeeping operations (PKOs) included a distinct military information branch (MIB) in
the field. Various UN operations (including those in the Congo\textsuperscript{55} and the former Yugoslavia) have created dedicated information bodies (MIBs) in the field. The need for strengthened informational procedures, both at headquarters and in the field, has been recognized. Both the Secretary-General and the Council have stressed the need for improved information capacity.\textsuperscript{56} An Information Centre could analyse information across the spectrum of UN roles, including, early warning, peacekeeping, and humanitarian assistance, as well as possibly arms control verification. The Brahimi report has recommended the establishment of Information and Strategic Analysis Secretariat (see above). Unfortunately, because of concerns from states that the UN would be prying into their internal affairs, the EISAS proposal has not yet been implemented. Given the appropriate checks and balances, many people feel that such concern can be adequately addressed.

\textbf{Information Gathering}

\textit{Priority information and potential information sources should be actively identified.}

Currently, UN early warning systems work in a passive information collection mode, which is only the first stage. As part of the feedback loop in the information system, analysis of incoming information should result in the identification of further information requirements. Often, there are crucial facts that must be “sought out.” It is important to follow up leads and “hunches” in the second stage. Of course, the early warning unit should be aware of limits imposed by international law and UN policies on its information-gathering activities.\textsuperscript{57}

\textit{The early warning unit should be able to draw upon national information and intelligence agencies.}

National agencies sometimes have the most crucial information (e.g., on current troop positions, obtained by satellite, and illicit arms imports, obtained from “assets”). The Information and Research (I&R) Unit of the DPKO Situation Centre maintained useful links with national intelligence services. But this Unit, composed of gratis (freely supplied) officers from four of the five permanent members of the UN, was disbanded after the General Assembly required the Secretariat to cease the use of gratis officers. HEWS, which was tasked with an ambitious EW mandate, lacked any such contacts. It is vital that the proposed EW unit be in communication with such bodies, since they often have crucial information necessary for early warning. Of course, it may be necessary to corroborate reports from several agencies and sources to avoid inaccuracies and national biases.

\textit{Bring UN human rights agencies into close contact with the early warning unit.}

Human rights violations are important indicators of potential conflict. It is desirable to maintain an on-going dialogue with the UN’s human rights and refugee agencies (which are mostly based in Geneva).
Develop partnerships with NGOs, especially those engaged in warning.

Similarly, there will be great benefit to working more closely with groups that can provide some of this much needed information gathering and analysis capability. Often the first to arrive and the last to depart, international NGOs have experienced people in the field able to observe situations first hand and interact with many locals, formally and informally. NGOs are often quite willing to provide warnings to the UN because of the risk to the safety of their staff in the event of an escalation of conflict. Because they are not directly responsible to governments (unlike the UN), NGOs are often able to evade the sovereignty barrier. Indigenous NGOs may have even greater information-depth, though they might be constrained by local powers from sharing too much information with outsiders. There are several international NGOs that have joined with governmental organizations to form networks for early warning (e.g., the Forum on Early Warning and Response, with which the OCHA is already associated). Any future EW unit should be in close contact with NGOs.

Monitor early warnings issued by other organizations.

In some cases, early warnings will already have been sounded, often from sources within the country in question and sometimes from outside groups. The early warning unit should keep track of such warnings to prompt further investigation, to corroborate or discount the reports, and to pass them on when warranted.

Explore new information-gathering norms.

Since the end of the Cold War, there have been significant advances in on-site inspection standards for arms control and peacekeeping. The 1993 Chemical Weapons Convention, for instance, provides for the most intrusive system of inspection of any treaty yet, based on an “any site, anytime” approach (qualified by “managed access” provisions). In the not so distant future, similar “challenge inspection” provisions could be considered for incorporation into a global on-site inspection system favoring transparency in military affairs. Eisenhower’s proposal of 1960 for a UN aerial reconnaissance system, described earlier, should be re-examined by governments and others. This should be considered in addition to a capacity for acquiring reconnaissance from existing satellites. The UN should consider developing the capacity for aerial surveillance in its peacekeeping and other field missions.

Explore the possibilities for technology.

The UN has traditionally been technophobic, at headquarters as well as in the field. As mentioned, there are many technological possibilities still waiting to be explored, from remote sensing technologies (such as aerial and satellite monitoring) to ground sensors (such as miniature-seismic detectors). While there has been an expressed interest in technology within certain quarters of the UN (e.g., in the Peacekeeping Committee and in UN expert reports on verification) there has not been a single study on how monitoring technologies have an impact on peace and security and can play a positive role by helping the UN perform its various tasks, especially early warning.
Analysis and Dissemination

The EW unit should be provided with sufficient analytical skills to carry out its mandate.

None of the bodies currently tasked with early warning have a sufficient analytical capacity. For the ambitious mandate of early warning, much information must be analyzed and corroborated, leads must be followed and new information requirements identified. Formulations of potential scenarios and their continual modification, after checks against reality, are necessary. The Information and Research (I&R) Unit of the DPKO Situation Centre has demonstrated the capacity for this. This positive experience should be useful to the proposed EW unit.

Issuing reports on early warning to the UN membership should become a regular activity within the Secretariat (i.e., reports to the Secretary-General) and the wider UN System.

To establish a new “early warning” norm, which would help make the UN a more proactive body, conflict assessments should be made regularly, even if there are no specific early warnings to make. One possibility would be to include a section on potential future threats to the peace in the Annual Report of the Secretary-General. In addition, regular EW reports should be made by the Secretary-General to the Security Council, in formal as well as informal sessions. This is the essence of the responsibility imposed on him by Article 99 and as part of the UN's overall responsibility for maintaining international peace and security. The early warning function should become a regular and important part of his or her service.

Conclusion

The UN Secretary-General is now better positioned than ever before to engage in early warning. Early warning mandates have been formally endorsed by both the Security Council and the General Assembly, reinforcing the mandate in the Charter itself. The UN has better information systems, including the fantastic resources of the Internet. In addition, there appear to be progressive movers within the UN's international civil service and a Secretary-General who is thoroughly familiar and experienced with the UN's role in peacekeeping and conflict management.

Will the UN maintain its habitual pattern of reacting to conflicts instead being proactive in an attempt to warn and preempting them? If the Secretary-General and member states seize the possibilities for new peace mechanisms in the new century, and recognize that the time is ripe for expanded and earlier UN roles, then there is every possibility for hope. Then the formal application of Article 99 will be not merely a theoretical possibility, seldom used, but a living provision of the UN Charter and an additional tool that might help save the world from much misery and suffering. UN early warning for conflict prevention is surely an idea whose time has come.
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Notes

2. On 10 December 1920 the League Assembly adopted a resolution stating: “[i]t shall be the duty of the Secretary-General to call to the attention of the Council to any facts which in his opinion show that a member of the League has become a Covenant-breaking State within the Meaning of Article 16. Upon receiving such an intimation, the Council shall, on the request of any of its members, hold a meeting with the least possible delay to consider it…,” Records of the First Assembly, Plenary, 1920, 400.
6. The rigorous application of Article 99 entails a declaration to the Council that there may exist a new (not currently considered) threat to the peace. In UN procedural terms, this means adding a new item to the agenda of the Security Council. The Provisional Rules of Procedure (Rule 2) of the Council further state that “[t]he President shall call a meeting of the Security Council … if the Secretary-General brings to the attention of the Security Council any matter under Article 99."
7. The references for Table 14.1 are:


8. The right to provide input to the Council was enshrined in rule 22 of the Provisional Rules of Procedure of the Security Council which states: “The Secretary-General, or his deputy acting on his behalf, may make either oral or written statements to the Security Council concerning any question under consideration by it.”


16. A detailed study of early warning in Rwanda is provided in A. Walter Dorn and J. Matloff, “Preventing the Bloodbath: Could the UN have Predicted and Prevented the Rwanda Genocide?”, *Journal of Conflict Studies*, Vol. XX, No. 1 (Spring 2000).


18. The mission, however, lacks the means and skills to gather and analyze data about intentions (political intelligence).


22. The term “early warning” had been used in the humanitarian and disaster management fields for some time before it was applied to human conflicts.
23. Other compatible definitions are available. For instance, the Forum on Early Warning and Response (see <www.fewer.org>) defines early warning as "the systematic collection and analysis of information coming from areas of crises for the purposes of: 1. anticipating the escalation of violent conflict; 2. development of strategic responses to these crises; and 3. the presentation of options to critical actors for the purposes of decision making" (as quoted in the Country Indicators for Foreign policy (CIFP) project database, located at <www.carleton.ca/cifp/others/methodsreview.pdf>, accessed 18 February 2001).

24. For a comparison between early warning and risk assessment see CIFP, ibid.

25. One of the reasons that there have been no explicit Article 99 invocations in recent years is that, since 1988, the vast majority of the meetings of the Security Council have been informal, behind closed doors. The Secretary-General communicates new information regularly at these meetings but it is difficult to assess the number of early warnings that have been made, if any, with regards to situations that are not already on the Security Council agenda, given that the meetings are closed to the public. Even UN member states that are not members of the Council do not regularly receive the minutes from these quasi-secret meetings.

26. Article 35 of the UN Charter states: “Any Member of the United Nations may bring any dispute, or any situation of the nature referred to in Article 34, to the attention of the Security Council or of the General Assembly.”


32. Lie, *In the Cause of Peace*, 231.

33. U Thant, *View from the UN*, 382.


36. NewsEdge Corporation of Burlington, MA, claims to the world's largest independent news integrator.

37. Furthermore Eisenhower pledged that “the United States is prepared not only to accept United Nations aerial surveillance, but to do everything in its power to contribute to the rapid organization and successful operation of such international surveillance.” “Events incident to the Summit Conference (16 May, 1960),” in *Documents on Disarmament*, (Washington: US Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, 1960), 226.

38. Examples of this are ReliefWeb (<www.reliefweb.int>) and the various Integrated Regional Information Networks (IRIN), the first one having been established for the Great Lakes. ReliefWeb devotes several pages to early warning, though it does not consolidate the early warnings that may have been placed in the “By-Country” reports.

39. ReliefWeb provides information about on-going emergencies and crises in the a host of states/regions, including Afghanistan, Angola, Caucasus (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia), Russian Fed./Chechnya, Great Lakes (Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda, Zaire), Iraq, DPR Korea, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Sudan, Tajikistan. In addition to covering complex emergencies in over 20 states,
there is information on (short-duration) natural disasters in many others. The digital archives can also provide a useful historical record from which emerging and future conflicts can be understood and predicted.

40. The Hot Line fax number in Geneva, Switzerland was given as 41-22-917-0092.

41. Mr. Ayala Lasso, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, quoted in UN Doc. DPI/1550/HR, September 1994.

42. The composition of the I&R unit, consisting only of seconded nationals from four of the permanent five members of the Security Council, did pose the potential problem that incoming information may be biased towards the interests of the UN's most powerful states. In practice, however, such natural biases can be taken into account and found acceptable because more information is generally better than less.

43. UN Secretary-General, *50th Anniversary Report on the Work of the Organization* (New York: United Nations, 1996), (UN Sales No. E.96.I.19) — see section on “preventive diplomacy and peacemaking”, 193. DPA was created in March 1992, and was officially given responsibilities for preventive diplomacy and peace-making one year later. Prior to that, such functions were performed by the Executive Office of the Secretary-General. (See General Assembly resolution A/47/120 for the mandate of the Department of Political Affairs.) A good summary of DPA responsibilities is provided in DPA overview <http://www.un.org/smlogo.gif>: “The DPA has five main responsibilities in support of preventive action and peacemaking. First, it must monitor, analyze and assess political developments throughout the world. Next, the Department identifies potential or actual conflicts in whose control and resolution the United Nations can play a useful role. It then prepares recommendations to the Secretary-General about appropriate actions in such cases. Fourth, the Department executes the approved policy when it is of a diplomatic nature. Finally, it assists the Secretary-General in carrying out political activities decided by him and/or mandated by the General Assembly and the Security Council in the areas of preventive diplomacy, peacemaking, peacekeeping and peace-building, including arms control and disarmament.”


45. In fact, the previous Secretary-General, Boutros Boutros-Ghali, wrote in his “Supplement to an Agenda for Peace,” submitted to the General Assembly on 3 January 1995, that “in an international bureaucracy interdepartmental cooperation and coordination come even less naturally than they do in a national environment.”


47. The Framework for Coordination process has, however, identified and started processes to address root causes of conflict. Potential early warning successes are in the Fergana Valley in Central Asia and in regards to insurgencies in Nepal. Also, as a result of a framework process, the Secretary-General agreed early on to send a special envoy to the Central African Republic. According to those involved, the Framework process is becoming more effective in recognizing potential conflict situations and creating an interdepartmental response. However, the follow-up studies that are needed to analyze and confirm the successes and learn lessons from the experiences have not yet been instituted.

48. The IASC was created by the General Assembly in resolution 46/182 of 19 December 1991. It is composed of the executive heads of the UN humanitarian organizations as well as ICRC, the International Federation of the Red Cross and the Red Crescent Societies, the International Organization for Migration, and the non-governmental consortia International Council of Voluntary Agencies, Interaction and the Steering Committee for Humanitarian Response.

50. In Resolution 47/120 of 18 December 1992, the General Assembly “Encourages the Secretary-General to continue, in accordance with Article 99 of the Charter of the United Nations, to bring to the attention of the Security Council, at his discretion, any matter which in his opinion may threaten the maintenance of international peace and security, together with his recommendations thereon.” In 1999, the President of the Security Council stated (S/PRST/1999/34): “the Council encourages the Secretary-General to improve further the capacity to identify potential threats to international peace and security and invites him to indicate any requirements to fulfill these capacities, including the development of the Secretariat’s expertise and resources.”

51. In several resolutions on the Protection and Security of Small States, the General Assembly “Urges the Secretary-General to pay special attention to monitoring the security situation of small States and to consider making use of the provisions of Article 99 of the Charter.” (See resolutions 44/51 of 8 December 1989, 46/43 of 9 December 1991 and 49/31 of 30 January 1995.)

52. The 1982 Manila Declaration on the Peaceful Settlement of International Disputes (approved in General Assembly resolution 37/10 of 15 November 1982) provides that “[t]he Secretary-General should make full use of the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations concerning the responsibilities entrusted to him.” The 1987 “Declaration on the Enhancement of the Effectiveness of the Principle of Refraining from the Threat or Use of Force in International Relations” (approved in resolution 42/22 of 18 November 1987) states: “States should encourage the Secretary-General to exercise fully his functions with regard to the maintenance of international peace and security and the peaceful settlement of disputes, in accordance with the Charter, including those under Articles 98 and 99, and fully cooperate with him in this respect.” The 1988 “Declaration on the Prevention and Removal of Disputes and Situations Which May Threaten International Peace and Security and on the Role of the United Nations in this Field” (approved in resolution 43/51 of 1988) states: “the Secretary-General should be encouraged to consider using, at as early a stage as he deems appropriate, the right that is accorded to him under Article 99 of the Charter.”

53. Lakhdar Brahimi, “Report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations” (Brahimi Report, named after its chair, Mr. Lakhdar Brahimi, the former Foreign Minister of Algeria), UN Docs. A/55/305 and S/2000/809 of 21 August 2000. The main references to EISAS are to be found in Sections II.G (“Information Gathering, Analysis and Strategic Planning Capacities”) and V (“Peace Operations in the Information Age”).


55. For a description of the first such body, the Military Information Branch in the UN’s Congo operation, see A. Walter Dorn and David H. Bell, “Intelligence and Peacekeeping: The UN Operation in the Congo 1960-64”, International Peacekeeping, Vol. 2, No. 1 (Spring 1995), 11-33.

56. The Council President stated on 22 February 1995: “The Security Council strongly supports the Secretary-General’s conclusion that peacekeeping operations need an effective information capacity, and his intention to address this requirement in future PKOs from the planning stage.”


58. The UN Special Commission has also gained much experience from its inspections in Iraq. In Cambodia, the UN peacekeeping force (UNTAC) was given unprecedented powers of inspection (e.g., extending to inspection of files and documents in the offices of the political parties).