The Warning-Response Problem and Missed Opportunities in Preventive Diplomacy

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Foreword

The argument that nothing can be done to prevent genocide or other forms of mass violence is increasingly unconvincing. Genocide on the scale of Bosnia or Rwanda can be anticipated and prevented. Early warning is a prerequisite both for any prudent decision to act and for effective action itself.

In this concise essay, Alexander George and Jane Holl argue that leaders need the kind of warning that will induce them to act preventively, not simply warning that a bad situation is getting worse. Leaders tend to put off hard decisions as long as they can, and this has often resulted in delay or paralysis in dealing with developing crises. To prevent violent conflicts, leaders must overcome this initial policy paralysis.

The events that could trigger widespread violence are usually different from the events that trigger a preventive response from outside parties. It would not, for example, have been possible to give an unambiguous, precise warning that a plane crash in Central Africa would precipitate the slaughter of nearly one million people. But many earlier indications of the possibility of genocide in Rwanda in 1994 were ignored, and no preventive plan of action was in place. As George and Holl point out, outside parties must become more receptive to warning.

Early warning will not ensure successful preventive action unless there is a fundamental change of attitude by governments and international organizations. Third parties should not simply wait for unambiguous disasters and mass slaughter before they take preventive action. Rather, a systematic and practical early warning system should be combined with consistently updated contingency plans for preventive action that provide leaders with a repertoire of responses. This would be a radical departure from the present system, where when a trigger event sets off an explosion of violence, it is usually too difficult, too costly, and too late for a rapid and effective response. This early warning system would be a crucial component of the international preventive framework envisioned by the Carnegie Commission on Preventing Deadly Conflict.

The Commission has always defined broadly the groups that would participate in such a system. States, nongovernmental organizations, business enterprises, religious leaders, scientific groups, the media, and international organizations all have a role to play in providing early warning and in responding to warning. Logically, early warning should be given first to those who can take

action. This generally means governments and groups likely to be immediately involved in the crisis, governments and leaders nearest to the scene of conflict, the United Nations (particularly the member states of the UN Security Council), and regional organizations. Religious hierarchies may also be warned, particularly of situations in which local religious leaders and institutions could play positive roles. In addition, those who can induce governments, organizations, and agencies to act (the media, business communities, and concerned publics) should be kept informed of badly deteriorating situations. Public expectations that governments will act responsibly to ward off disasters are a significant factor in motivating preventive actions.

This is one of several studies of the warning-response problem that the Commission is sponsoring. The role of leaders in responding to warning will be illuminated by Boutros Boutros-Ghali, George Bush, Jimmy Carter, and Mikhail Gorbachev in a collection of essays to be published in the fall. Professor Bruce Jentleson, director of the University of California, Davis, Washington Center, is editing a set of 11 case studies of preventive diplomacy in the post-Cold War world that will appear in the Commission book series published by Rowman & Littlefield. Recognizing the important and sometimes ambiguous role of the media in providing warning and motivating response, the Commission has asked three distinguished journalists, Tom Gjelten, Nik Gowing, and Robert Manoff, to present their views in an essay collection. The Commission is also sponsoring several studies of instruments -- sanctions, incentives, mediation, and the military, for example -- to enlarge and sharpen leaders' repertoire of responses.

The Commission is grateful to Alex George and Jane Holl for advancing the thinking on this crucial aspect of conflict prevention.

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The Warning-Response Problem and Missed Opportunities in Preventive Diplomacy

Specialists may disagree on the scope of preventive diplomacy and, more broadly, preventive measures of various kinds. They may differ also in their assessment of policies and strategies to ward off undesirable events. There is no disagreement, however, on the importance of obtaining early warning of incipient or slowly developing crises if preventive action is to have any chance of success.

The end of the Cold War has diminished neither the importance nor the challenge of obtaining early warning. Indeed the intelligence community today monitors and analyzes an increasing number of factors, in addition to traditional indicators of potential conflict, such as environmental degradation, economic conditions, and population trends. The increased complexity of gathering, sorting, and analyzing data for early warning results from the pressing need to respond quickly, efficiently, and effectively to rapidly changing global events. In an era of increasing demands on limited resources, the task is all more difficult.[1]

In recent years the problem of obtaining early warning has received a great deal of attention not only within the United Nations, regional organizations, and governments, but also from nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and research specialists.[2] However, the more difficult problem of marshaling timely, effective *responses* to warning has received much less systematic attention. A major objective of this paper is to highlight this need for more emphasis on developing effective responses for preventive action of various kinds.[3] This paper also emphasizes that the design and management of early warning systems should be intimately connected with the task of responding to warning. We base this view on the belief that an improved capacity to know about and correctly interpret events early will improve the responses that are brought eventually to bear -- a belief that is shared by a range of policy professionals, government officials, and informed publics. The paper does not offer specific policy recommendations for overcoming the gap between early warning and effective response; rather, it provides a conceptual approach through which to analyze the problem. We conclude the paper with a discussion of how warning and response interact in policymaking. When successful, that interaction can help avert violence. When unsuccessful, the result is often looked upon as a "missed opportunity." We discuss such missed opportunities, but with reservations, not least because of the dangers associated with counterfactual analysis. However, well-crafted examinations of missed opportunities for preventive diplomacy can be useful in bringing to light and learning from past warning-response failures.

TOWARD AN INTEGRATED WARNING-RESPONSE FRAMEWORK

Too much of the considerable effort to develop improved warning indicators has been divorced from the problem of linking available warning with appropriate responses. One explanation for this separation may stem from the stark lines drawn between collection and analysis in the intelligence community.[4] Perhaps there is reason for this separation, for this approach may be traced to the increased professionalization of the intelligence field, where intelligence analysts assiduously ward off any hint that they "do policy." They focus their efforts instead on improving the ways in which information is acquired and analyzed.[5] Another explanation may lie in the very difficulty of policymaking in today's international environment. It may simply be beyond the capacity of any single office or agency to stay abreast of global developments in such a way as to anticipate, craft, launch, and manage intricate, multilateral policy responses.

But whatever the institutional causes of the warning-response gap, expectations that governments will act responsibly to help ward off possible crises are quite real.[6] These expectations arise, in part, because an increasingly mobile world population combined with the explosion of global communications (the so-called CNN effect) have helped create and inform attentive, expert, and often activist communities in many countries who know about problems before they become violent. In part as a consequence, it has become less plausible for government officials to try to explain away policy missteps or failures by pointing to the lack of timely or correctly evaluated intelligence, although the urge remains almost irresistible.[7]

The complexity of world events combined with the compressed time span within which decision makers are expected to craft and articulate a policy to deal with unfolding crises make it harder, yet at the same time more necessary, for intelligence analysts and policymakers to work within an integrated "warning-response" framework. Indeed, the need for such an integrated approach

was the fundamental lesson drawn from the surprise attack on Pearl Harbor and provided the starting point for post-World War II efforts to design systems and procedures for avoiding such a lapse.[8]

As with the need to respond effectively to avoid a surprise attack, preventive action to deter the outbreak of various post -- Cold War crises also demands an integrated warning-response framework. Yet, for such crises, the warning-response problem is often more complicated and difficult than for avoiding surprise attack. In the latter case, policymakers have already determined that some set of observable hostile actions would be an unmistakable threat and have the strongest possible incentives to acquire timely warning and to respond to that threat in some way. The same cannot be said for many lesser contingencies, such as ethnic conflicts or patterns of gross human rights abuses. Since situations of this kind -- even in crisis -- pose a much less grave threat to the interests of a third party, policymakers are often less inclined to demand early warning or to take it seriously and respond to it.[9]

But one may wonder whether there have been many crises for which *no* warning was available, however misperceived, misjudged, or ignored. Experts predicted war in Bosnia even as the Vance plan brought a cessation of hostilities between Croatia and Serbia in 1992. The violent spasm in Rwanda in 1994 was anticipated months in advance, although the magnitude of the killing was not precisely foreseen. Even Saddam Hussein's precipitous invasion of Kuwait in 1990 was no great surprise to those who watch events in the Middle East closely.[10] If events such as in Bosnia, Kuwait, and Rwanda are known (and increasingly knowable, given the rapidly contracting nature of global interactions), why are they not prevented? No simple answer is possible, yet a partial explanation may lie in the examination of how warnings are recognized and transmitted to policymakers, and with policymakers' assessments of the implications of such warnings for action.

THE PROBLEM OF RECEPTIVITY TO WARNING

[11] Receptivity to warning has been a problem not only for conflicts that occur on the margin of states' interests but also for situations threatening a surprise attack. Although the reasons for inadequate receptivity and response to warning differ in some ways for these two types of threats, it will be useful first to review experience with the problem of receptivity to warning of possible surprise attack and, related to this, to unexpected diplomatic initiatives that trigger the possibility of war. Properly scrutinized and evaluated, this historical experience may be suggestive for the design and use of warning-response systems for preventive action for other types of crises.

Experimental research provides a useful starting point for analysis of factors that impede receptivity to warning. Laboratory studies of difficulties in perception of stimuli provide useful analogies to the problem of receptivity to warning of emerging threats in the international arena. The results of perception experiments, however, do not encourage hopes for easy or complete solutions to this problem. Studies of a person's ability to recognize a stimulus that is embedded in a stream of other stimuli have shown at least three factors to be important:

1. The "signal-to-noise" ratio -- i.e., the strength of the signal relative to the strength of the confusing or distracting background stimuli
2. The expectations of observers called upon to evaluate such signals

3. The rewards and costs associated with recognizing and correctly appraising the signal

One might assume that the stronger the signal and the weaker the background "noise," the easier it should be to detect the signal; weak signals are simply not picked up. However, even controlled laboratory tests reveal the task of correct signal detection to be more complicated than this. The results of perceptual experiments that deal with relatively simple psychophysical auditory or visual stimuli indicate that detection of a signal is not simply a function of its strength relative to background "noise." Indeed, the effect of a signal's strength on the ability to identify it can be less important than the second and third variables mentioned above.

The complex environment of international affairs only complicates matters further, adding domestic and international overlays to the basic "map" of the crisis situation. A decision maker's expectations and the rewards and costs associated with recognition of the signal may be more important in determining receptivity to and correct appraisal of information about an emerging threat.

But while expectations regarding both the emerging crisis and the potential responses play a key role in a decision maker's receptivity to warning, the logic of warning and the logic of response conflict. The logic of warning can be summarized as "the sooner the better." However, policymakers generally prefer to put off hard choices as long as possible. Thus, even if a leader expects a situation to deteriorate, additional information or warning to this effect may not prompt preventive action.

Because policy choices in a crisis are often so difficult to make, individuals (as well as small policymaking groups and organizations) may discredit information that calls into question existing expectations, preferences, or policies. It is well known that discrepant information of this kind is often required, in effect, to meet higher standards of evidence and to pass stricter tests of admissibility than new information that supports existing expectations and policies. As a result, it is disconcertingly easy at times for policymakers and their intelligence specialists to discount discrepant information or to interpret it in such a way as to protect a preferred hypothesis or policy. In the United States, the establishment of multiple intelligence organizations, with their capacity for redundancy and rich detail, was designed, in part, to counter this tendency. Yet the habit persists. Indeed, not only is the discrepant information still discounted, but entire intelligence organizations can be discounted.[12]

The "reward-cost" aspect of correct signal detection, too, can sharply reduce the policymaker's receptivity to information of emerging threats, *for early warning does not necessarily make for easy response. On the contrary, warning often forces policymakers to confront difficult or unpalatable decisions*. One means for avoiding such difficult decisions is to reduce one's receptivity to warning signals. Moreover, the policy "background" against which new information is judged can strengthen the tendency to ignore or downgrade incoming information that challenges existing beliefs or exacerbates decision dilemmas. Thus, once policy decisions have been made within the government, they tend to acquire a momentum of their own and the support of vested interests. Top-level decision makers are often reluctant to reopen policy matters that were decided earlier with great difficulty; to do so, they fear, can be taken as an

indirect admission of policy failure and easily plunge the government once again into the turmoil of decision making.

The Korean War

Psychological mechanisms of this kind have contributed to a number of important intelligence and policy failures. Among them was the Truman administration's pronounced lack of receptivity to the ample warning available in the spring of 1950 of the forthcoming North Korean attack on South Korea. As studies have shown, had the warning been taken more seriously, the administration might have weighed more carefully whether the perceived stakes in Korea warranted U.S. military intervention.[13] If an affirmative answer to this fundamental question had emerged, the administration might have undertaken to deter North Korea. As it was, the North Koreans acted as they did on the mistaken notion that the United States would not intervene militarily on behalf of South Korea. Thus, the Korean War, with all of its fateful consequences, qualifies as a genuine example of war-through-miscalculation. It was a war that might well have been avoided had Washington been more receptive to warning and acted upon it.[14]

This case illustrates how information processing within the U.S. policymaking system was impeded and distorted both by the expectations or mind-set of the administration and by the costs that greater receptivity to incoming information of the emerging threat would have entailed. *Taking available warning seriously always carries the "penalty" of deciding what to do about it.* In this case, it would have required President Truman and Secretary of State Dean Acheson to reconsider the earlier decision that they had made in 1949 to draw a line defining U.S. security interests in the Far East to exclude Formosa, South Korea, and Indochina. The exclusion of Formosa was part of the administration's policy of disengaging from the Chinese Nationalists, a decision that was far more controversial within the administration and with the public than the exclusion of South Korea. So much so that a reversal of the existing policy of no military commitment to South Korea in response to the warning of a possible North Korean attack would have been politically inconceivable unless Truman and Acheson had also been willing -- which they were not, prior to the North Korean attack -- to extend a new commitment to the Chinese Nationalist regime on Formosa as well.

As this case and others show, the policy background at the time warning becomes available may subtly erode the policymaker's receptivity to it. A similar misfortune occurred later in the Korean War. During September and early October 1950, the administration eased itself into a commitment to occupy North Korea and to unify it with South Korea. But when repeated warnings came in that such a move would trigger Communist Chinese military intervention, the administration found itself so locked into its more ambitious war policy that it dismissed the warnings as a bluff. To give credence to the worrisome indications of a forthcoming Communist Chinese intervention carried with it the cost of reconsidering and abandoning the war policy that had given rise to the danger. In this critical situation, wishful thinking contributed to the administration's grossly defective information processing. Once again the result was that Washington was taken by surprise when the Chinese launched their massive offensive in late November. A new war resulted that neither side had wanted, one that might have been avoided had Washington not misperceived and misjudged the evidence of Chinese intentions. [15]

The Blockade of West Berlin

Similarly, in the spring of 1948, most American policymakers refused to take seriously the possibility of a Soviet blockade of West Berlin despite mounting tension and the fact that the Soviets had recently imposed a temporary blockade of Western ground access to the city. Some of the same psychological dynamics that interfered with optimal processing of incoming information in the cases already described can be seen here, too. For U.S. policymakers to have taken available warning of a possible Soviet blockade of West Berlin seriously would have carried with it the "cost" of having then to face up to and resolve difficult, controversial policy problems.

At the time an American commitment to West Berlin did not yet exist. Officials within the administration were badly divided over the wisdom of attempting to defend the Western outpost that lay deep in Soviet-occupied East Germany. Under these circumstances, it was easier to believe the Soviets would not undertake serious action against West Berlin than it was to decide beforehand what the American response should be to such an eventuality. In this case, fortunately, although American policymakers were surprised by the Soviet blockade, Truman dealt with the crisis without backing down or going to war.[16]

The Gulf War

The August 2, 1990, Iraqi invasion of Kuwait offers a more recent example of the difficulty of correctly reading an adversary's signals. By mid-July of 1990, U.S. intelligence had identified the buildup of some 35,000 Iraqi troops and 300 tanks on Kuwait's border. At the same time, Iraq was bringing charges before the Arab League that Kuwait had, among other things, broken OPEC oil production quotas and stolen oil from Iraqi territory. In compensation, Iraq demanded an increase in the price of oil (from $18 to $25 a barrel), $2.4 billion from Kuwait, and a moratorium on Iraqi debts to other Arab states stemming from the Iran-Iraq War. Should the demands not be met, Saddam Hussein threatened that he would "have no choice but to resort to effective action to put things right and ensure the restitution of [Iraqi] rights." [17] Through the latter portion of July, U.S. intelligence continued to monitor Iraqi troop advancements. By the end of the month, 100,000 troops had been assembled on the Kuwaiti border, accompanied by strategic deployments of ammunition and supplies. These moves, together with other ominous signs, such as the continued buildup of biological and chemical weapons and strong evidence of a nuclear weapons development program, highlighted the threat posed to the region and vital U.S. interests.[18]

Analysis of Iraqi intentions differed within the intelligence and diplomatic communities. Even the Kuwaitis at first believed Hussein was merely bluffing to gain economic concessions. Analysts tracking the situation within both the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) eventually concluded (by July 25 and July 30, respectively) that Iraq intended to invade Kuwait. Even at this late date, however, high-ranking officials in the intelligence and military communities remained skeptical of the invasion analysis, believing instead that Iraq was likely to make only a limited border crossing.[19]

American diplomatic response to the Iraqi troop movements was equivocal. Bush administration officials repeatedly stated that the U.S. had no defense treaties with Kuwait or other Arab states threatened by Iraq. The U.S. ambassador to Iraq reportedly told Hussein that "we have no opinion on the Arab-Arab conflicts, like your border disagreement with Kuwait."[20] At no point was Iraq told what the consequences would be should it attack Kuwait or other Gulf states. Many now believe that the absence of a clear response led Iraq to believe that its invasion of Kuwait would be met with little resistance by the international community, and more specifically, the U.S. [21]

These several lessons of historical experience regarding lack of receptivity and inadequate response to warning of surprise military or diplomatic actions are applicable also to the different kinds of threats in the post-Cold War world that effective preventive action must address.

Genocide in Rwanda

The Rwandan conflict offers another, brutal, example of the difficulties associated with generating effective responses to the types of conflict dominating the post-Cold War era -- situations that do not threaten a nation's vital interests.

"Most leading activists believe that the government has compiled lists naming people to be assassinated when circumstances require."[22] So reported Africa Watch in a 1992 report highlighting human rights abuses and tensions between the Hutu majority and Tutsi minority in Rwanda. Beginning on April 6, 1994, these lists were used as part of a killing spree that would, in a matter of weeks, take the lives of nearly one million people. The significant presence of international organizations (the UN and the Organization of African Unity) and representatives of key donor countries (including France, Belgium, and the United States) ensured that warning of the developing crisis was received by prominent actors in the international community. Despite this significant presence and ample evidence of deteriorating circumstances in Rwanda, there was an acute failure to respond. A number of factors contributed to this failure. According to one report:

There existed an internal predisposition on the part of a number of the key actors to deny the possibility of genocide because facing the consequences might have required them to alter their course of action. The mesmerization with the success of Arusha [The 1993 peace accord between the Hutu- dominated government and the Tutsi-dominated Rwandan Patriotic Front] and the failure of Somalia together cast long shadows and distorted an objective analysis of Rwanda.[23]

Among the more obvious warning signals were "hate radio" broadcasts directed at Tutsis and moderate Hutus, continued training of Hutu militia units, and government-sponsored killings. Yet none of the major outside actors formulated, let alone articulated, a response to the potential outbreak of widespread violence. According to Human Rights Watch consultant Alison Des Forges, a particularly important event was the February 1994 murder of a moderate Hutu cabinet member by government soldiers. Des Forges noted, "when they [Hutu extremists] saw they could get away with that kind of violence . . . it encouraged them to go ahead with the larger operation."[24]

While the foregoing discussion of receptivity to warning has been necessarily brief, it indicates that the impediments are numerous and that they cannot be easily eliminated. For this reason, most specialists have urged that the problem of securing and analyzing warning should be linked closely with the problem of deciding what responses are appropriate and useful in the light of the available warning, however equivocal or ambiguous it may be. While high-confidence warning is desirable, often it is not available. But neither is high-confidence warning always necessary for making useful responses to the possibility of an emerging crisis.

Indeed, this discussion of receptivity to warning of emerging threats applies also to information about favorable developments elsewhere in the world that offer *opportunities* for foreign policymakers to advance positive goals. For many purposes, policymakers do not need or require high-confidence forecasts of emerging opportunities in order to explore and facilitate such openings and possibly to turn them to account. Thus, for example, following the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968 and the enunciation at that time of the Brezhnev Doctrine, policymakers in Washington (as well as other observers) speculated that these events may have increased China's anxiety regarding a Soviet invasion. Was this anxiety (which its ongoing border conflict with the Soviet Union could only have heightened) sufficient to make China interested in *détente* with the United States? We cannot be sure of Chinese thinking at that time, but the point that deserves emphasis here is that it did not require a forecast that could confidently predict Beijing's readiness for *détente* to make it worthwhile for Washington to explore and encourage the possibility discreetly. Sensible steps could be taken to reinforce and activate any disposition for *détente* on the part of the Chinese. From the standpoint of U.S. policy, the matter of possible *détente* was "actionable" even in the face of considerable uncertainty as to China's readiness and conditional willingness to reorient its policy towards the United States.[25]

THE WARNING-RESPONSE GAP

We have noted that policymakers are often not inclined to take early warning seriously or to act upon it in situations that pose the possibility of severe ethnic and religious conflicts, humanitarian disasters, or gross human rights violations.[26] A number of reasons exist for this passivity. The first is the relatively low stakes perceived to be at risk. At an early stage in their development, such contingencies simply are not perceived to pose grave threats to a given state's national interests. Moreover, whether a low-level conflict or incipient crisis will escalate in ways that would eventually engage major interests of individual states or the international community often remains problematical and difficult to forecast.

Second, despite efforts to improve early warning indicators of possible flare-ups, such events are likely to remain equivocal, subject to considerable uncertainty, and capable of diverse interpretations. It is not that *potential* major trouble spots cannot be identified; rather, the problem lies in understanding such situations well enough to forecast which ones are likely to explode and when. Experts and observers are likely to differ in their estimates of how serious a low-level situation will become, with what probability, and how soon.

Third, early warning indicators typically do not speak for themselves; they require analysis and interpretation. But the kinds of knowledge and theories needed for this purpose may be in short supply. As noted earlier, specialists have worked more on improving possible indicators than on developing better theories and models to assess and predict the significance of the indicators.[27]

Fourth, even in a case in which there is relatively good warning, policymakers may be reluctant to credit the warning and to take preventive action because they have been subjected too often to the "cry wolf" phenomenon. Oddly enough, intense policy concerns that actions may be seen as premature or unnecessary -- revealing an embarrassing policy naivete, or worse, the possible unneeded commitment of scarce resources -- generate a real wariness of "false triggers."[28] These policymakers, typically preoccupied with a battery of other problems that require urgent attention, often give only the barest attention to new, low-level crises that may never develop into serious concerns.

Fifth, and related to this, overload induces passivity. Given the large number of simmering crises, and given the ever-growing limitation of resources, policymakers find it impractical to respond with preventive actions to all of them, thinking that is reinforced by the general lack of knowledge regarding what efforts would be effective. Early warning of an equivocal, uncertain nature in such situations is insufficient for costly or risky responses.

Thus, in many ethnic and religious conflicts, humanitarian crises, or severe human rights abuses, *timely or accurate warning may not be the problem at all*. Rather, for one reason or another, as noted, no serious response is likely to be taken solely on the basis of early warning simply because a simmering situation that threatens to boil over may not be deemed important enough to warrant the type and scale of effort deemed necessary to prevent the hypothetical catastrophe. Moreover, this reaction can occur not only when what is at stake is only dimly perceived or not foreseen at all, but also if the coming crisis is *fully and accurately anticipated*.

Indeed, sixth and finally, it may be that a reluctance to act in the face of warning at times results not because warning is *not* taken seriously, but rather because decision makers take it very seriously but are nonetheless deterred by the prospects of a "slippery slope," that is, inexorable -- and potentially intractable -- involvement in an already nasty problem. This dilemma is particularly poignant for political leaders who must weigh incurring political costs now (in addition to the human and material costs that action entails) for benefits that will accrue downstream, if at all, with no guarantees that they would be given credit for preventing a disaster, now a non-event. Thus, even in cases where the prospect of a catastrophe is taken seriously, there may be a lack of "political will" to take timely and effective action.

Numerous observers have noted that governments often ignore an incipient crisis until it has escalated into a deadly struggle or a major catastrophe. All too often political leaders find it difficult to persuade their people to support potentially costly and risky operations before a disaster actually occurs. As one report put it:

People throughout the world tend to be guided by the media -- and they are predominantly Western media -- in determining when a problem warrants international action. Television coverage of a situation has become, for many, a precondition for action. Yet for most commercial networks, the

precondition for coverage is crisis. There has to be large-scale violence, destruction, or death before the media takes notice. Until that happens, governments are not under serious internal pressure to act. And by then, the international community's options have usually been narrowed, and made more difficult to implement effectively.[29]

But as noted earlier, even when events that could precipitate a major humanitarian or violent crisis are perceived in a timely manner and accurately evaluated, decision makers will often still defer taking preventive action. As we have seen, this inaction is either because the warning is not taken seriously, for the reasons mentioned, or because the warning is taken very seriously but decision makers are loath to confront the unpalatable choice of responses facing them. Particularly for the complex and seemingly intractable disputes that have characterized much of the violence of the post-Cold War period, it may be less the unfolding crisis that conditions how a decision maker processes warning than the implications of that crisis for action.

TOWARD BETTER USE OF WARNING

However a policymaker responds to warning, that response entails costs and risks of its own: indeed some responses could even be quite harmful. There is clearly a need to search for responses to warning that are useful in the situation without posing unacceptable costs. Even ambiguous warning, for example, gives policymakers more time to consider what to do: to step up efforts to acquire more information about the situation, to rehearse the decision problem that they would face if the warning proves to be correct, to spell out the likely consequences if the equivocal warning to which low probability is assigned proves to be genuine, to review their commitments and contingency plans, and -- not least in importance -- to seize the opportunity to avert a possible dangerous crisis. Thus, even ambiguous warning provides an opportunity to deal with the conflict situation and/or the misperceptions associated with it before it leads to a violent conflict.

Nevertheless, it is a truism to note that policymakers prefer to receive unequivocal warning before deciding whether and how to respond. But, as noted earlier, high-confidence early warning is seldom available, and it can be highly disadvantageous if policymakers defer action altogether until more conclusive warning is available. It is precisely because unambiguous warning is so difficult to obtain that policymakers must confront the question of what types of response are useful and acceptable, even though the warning is uncertain or equivocal.

As noted earlier, once the problem of warning is linked with its implications for action, it becomes significantly redefined. Early warning of a possible crisis is desirable not in and of itself but insofar as it provides decision makers with an opportunity to make a timely response of an appropriate kind that might be otherwise impossible. Warning gives the decision maker time to decide what to do and then to prepare to do it. Warning provides an opportunity to avert the expected crisis, to modify it, or to redirect it into some less dangerous and less costly direction. On occasion, warning may provide an opportunity to deal with a conflict-of-interest situation or misperceptions before they lead to a military conflict.

Consideration of the warning-response problem requires that we introduce another dimension into the analysis at this point. Since response to warning is never without cost or risk, the

development of warning-response systems, contingency response options, or *ad hoc* responses requires careful consideration of the possible costs as well as of the expected benefits of each option, weighed, of course, against the costs and benefits of inaction. At the same time, there are undoubtedly some responses to early warning of an equivocal and ambiguous character that are less costly than others. One could, for example, quietly intensify the collection of intelligence and/or begin discreet consultations with selected allies in order to clarify an uncertain situation before "going public" with more assertive measures, such as placing forces at increased readiness.

Admittedly, some low-cost responses may make only a limited or uncertain contribution to dealing with a troublesome situation. There may be, in other words, a trade-off between responses that promise a great deal but are costly and risky, and responses of a more modest but still useful kind that do not pose large costs and risks. The experience with trade-offs of this kind in dealing with the problem of surprise attack may be suggestive. In part, the trade-off dilemma in these cases can be dealt with by developing a calibrated warning-response system, one in which the level-of-readiness response increases with the level or urgency of warning.

For special historical reasons related to the trauma of Pearl Harbor, as noted earlier, American analysts concerned with the warning problem have focused attention primarily upon the danger of a surprise *all-out* military attack. Lesser types of threats and crises associated with the broader, and in many ways, more complex tasks of preventive diplomacy and preventive actions have not yet received as much systematic attention in efforts to develop warning-response systems. Thus, the major uses of warning contemplated by the U.S. planners in the past have focused upon (a) the use of warning to alert military forces in order to reduce their vulnerability and to shorten their response time; and (b) the use of warning to reinforce deterrence by signaling to the adversary a strong and credible commitment to respond.

A broader range of threats and types of crises should engage the interest of policymakers and specialists on crisis anticipation. Similarly, a broader range of response options than the two uses of warnings noted above should be developed.[30] A longer, more diversified list of possible uses of warning would include, but are not limited to, the following (general response options are listed here without attempting to judge their utility in any particular situation):

1. **Gather more information about the situation.** Step up collection of intelligence and public information.
2. **Reduce vulnerabilities.** Alert forces and citizens abroad to reduce their exposure and susceptibility to attacks of all kinds. Increase readiness of standby forces and alert special forces for contingency operations.
3. **Reinforce commitments.** Strengthen deterrence, whenever necessary, by signaling credible "red lines" that should not be crossed, using diplomatic means and, if necessary, military demonstrations.
4. **Engage the targeted state in *sustained* dialogue.** Establish clear and reliable channels for exchange of communications.
5. **Take measures to reduce potential political/diplomatic/economic costs that could result from the emerging crisis in the domestic or international arena.**
6. **Conduct consultations with key states and allies.** Raise the issue in the United Nations and other appropriate international forums.

7. **Undertake a public information campaign to inform populations at home and abroad of the unfolding circumstances.** Prepare publics for possible coercive diplomacy or military action.
8. **Conduct a decision rehearsal, i.e., rehearse the decision problem that one would be confronted with if the warning proved justified.** A rehearsal involves (a) assessing the damage to important interests should the crisis erupt (something that policymakers have done very poorly in some past crises); and (b) anticipating the political and psychological pressures that are likely to be brought to bear upon policymakers should the crisis occur.
9. **Consider and, if necessary, clarify one's commitment to take action should the crisis emerge.** Warning can have the useful function of encouraging policymakers to identify and assess the complex interests that may be jeopardized if the crisis develops. Such a review may also result in a timely redefinition or clarification of existing commitments, identifying and separating issues that are peripheral and negotiable from those that are central.
10. **Review, update, and rehearse existing contingency plans.** Improvise new policy options tailored to the emerging crisis, taking into account potential actions of other states with interests at stake.
11. **Initiate formal negotiations, efforts at conciliation, or mediation.** On many occasions, for example, the UN secretary-general's office responds to early warning by sending out fact-finding missions or by extending "good offices."

The preceding list of response options characterizes in general terms the types of responses available to decision makers and is intended for illustrative purposes. More specific options must be identified in policy planning tailored to the type of situation and problem that is envisaged by the warning. Obviously, different types of incipient crises will require identification of different response options.[31]

This brief list should not obscure the implied steps that each measure entails. For example, using military demonstrations to underscore one's seriousness of purpose must be balanced against the desire to control the level of engagement (and avoid a "slippery slope").

So much of this list seems like straightforward policymaking. What we mean to emphasize, however, is the need for an explicit effort to map various responses to anticipated developments -- before those developments occur -- and to associate particular response options more closely with foreseeable cues. [32]

MISSED OPPORTUNITIES

Those who call attention to failures to take timely, appropriate actions in response to early warning of an emerging crisis often refer to them as missed opportunities. The clear implication is that it might well have been possible to avoid or limit the development of a major crisis -- whether a violent ethnic or religious conflict, a humanitarian catastrophe, or a gross human rights violation -- if only the international community or an external actor had intervened.

A word of caution may be in order. "Missed opportunities" implies that the "misses" constitute important policy *failures* of various kinds. Indeed, it is difficult, if not impossible, to avoid the analytic conclusion that such "failures" contributed measurably to a worsened situation on the ground. This assumption, that a crisis situation is *the* measure against which policy decisions and their aftermath are judged, may contribute to analytic clarity, but it fails to represent adequately

all of the factors that constrain policy decisions -- especially in times of crisis. Indeed, as we have tried to illustrate, factors unrelated to the crisis situation (domestic elections, credibility and other strategic concerns, or other international problems) can affect a decision maker's receptivity to warning more than the circumstances causing the alarm -- even when warning is "loud and clear." Moreover, these other factors are frequently perceived by decision makers not only to be legitimate to take into account, they are often seen as *more* legitimate considerations than circumstances on the ground. Indeed, decision makers most closely associated with many of these so-called missed opportunities resulting in policy "failures" often strongly resist that indictment, arguing instead that their action (or wise restraint) was in the best interest of the public that they serve. Thus, even as the following discussion focuses on the crisis situation as the main measure of the effectiveness of actions taken (or not), we recognize the tensions that exist within the full context of these situations.

The assertion that a missed opportunity occurred is an example of counterfactual reasoning, a practice that is very frequently resorted to in everyday life as well as in serious analysis of historical outcomes. However widespread and indeed indispensable, counterfactual analysis is recognized to be a very weak, problematical method. This is not the occasion to discuss recent efforts by scholars to identify requirements for more disciplined uses of counterfactual reasoning.[33] Suffice it to say that statements that missed opportunities occurred in cases of failure of preventive diplomacy must be evaluated carefully to distinguish highly plausible from implausible or barely plausible claims. Efforts to do so are necessary not merely to improve historical analysis of cases in which preventive diplomacy was not attempted or was ineffectual; more rigorous counterfactual analysis is necessary also to draw correct lessons from such failures.

A useful start in this direction can be made by distinguishing different types of missed opportunities. The following is a provisional (no doubt incomplete) listing:

1. Cases in which there was *no response* to warning by policymakers, who either ignored the warning or regarded it as insufficiently reliable, too equivocal, or uncertain (Example: Iraq's 1990 invasion of Kuwait).
2. Cases of *inadequate analysis* of ample warning indicators, and, thus, an inaccurate forecast of what was to occur (Examples: the 1979 Iranian revolution; the North Korean attack on South Korea in June 1950).
3. Cases of *inadequate response* to warning, either too slow or too weak (Examples: slow international response to the developing crisis in Somalia; slow, graduated sanctions against Serbia).
4. Cases of *misused opportunity* involving responses of a misconceived, harmful, inappropriate character (Example: European Union recognition of Croatia without securing a prior guarantee of the rights and interests of its substantial Serbian minority).
5. Cases of *inconsistent responses* (Example: In the unfolding crisis in Yugoslavia, European countries were often at cross-purposes, such as in 1991 when they tried to serve as mediator between Serbia and Croatia while pushing international recognition of Croatia and the imposition of sanctions on Serbia.)
6. Cases of *incomplete response* to a complex crisis (Example: Somalia, where the international community undertook to deliver humanitarian assistance but refused to engage in peace enforcement efforts.)

7. Cases of *contradictory responses* (Example: Efforts by some states to install peacekeepers in Nagorno-Karabakh undermined by other states opposed to such a move.)

In addition to some such typology of different types of possible missed opportunities, we need, as noted earlier, some way of assessing the merits of claims that there was indeed a missed opportunity to avoid the disaster that followed. Counterfactuals are a way of rewriting history (exploring the possibility of an alternative outcome) by conducting a mental experiment -- i.e., "if only this rather than that had been done, the outcome would have been quite different." Some counterfactual assertions are more plausible than others. Those of us who believe in the necessity for timely responses to early warning may inadvertently exaggerate the plausibility of a missed opportunity in cases that developed into major conflicts or severe humanitarian catastrophes.

Several suggestions can be made for assessing the plausibility of assertions of a missed opportunity. A basic distinction needs to be made between two connotations of "opportunity." One use of the term implies that a significantly better/good outcome would *surely* have been achieved if it were not for . . ., or if only this rather than that had been done. A weaker connotation of the term "opportunity" is that a better outcome was *possible*; it *might* have been achieved if . . . A still weaker connotation states merely that a better outcome was possible but without indicating what might have been done to secure it. In making assertions of a missed opportunity, and of course, in evaluating such claims, it is important to keep this distinction in mind. Frequently, critics who identify a missed opportunity blur this distinction.

Admittedly, it is often difficult to judge the degree of confidence that can be ascribed to what appears to have been a missed opportunity. Practitioners who engage in efforts at preventive diplomacy may well regard these distinctions as an academic exercise. It must be recognized that those who engage in preventive actions often do so without demanding of themselves that they be able to predict outcomes with high confidence; they make what they regard to be appropriate efforts and use what leverage they have to influence the course of events. They reason that when the stakes are high, one must make efforts to influence the course of events even when prospects of success are highly uncertain. It is only human to believe that adverse outcomes might have been avoided or moderated, if only . . . .

Such explanations for what may be dubious claims on behalf of a particular missed opportunity leave us with the task of developing reasonable ways of evaluating them. To construct a good counterfactual analysis of a missed opportunity one needs to start with a good explanation of the actual outcome of the case at hand. This step is important, obviously, because the counterfactual changes what are thought to be the critical variable(s) that presumably accounted for the historical outcome. If one has an erroneous/unsatisfactory explanation for it, then the counterfactual analysis that argues that a better outcome was possible, "if only . . .," is likely to be flawed. Both the historical explanation and the counterfactually derived alternative to it are likely to be more correct or plausible if they are supported by relevant generalizations (and theory).

In formulating hypothetical missed opportunities and in evaluating them, at least two questions need to be addressed: First, was the alternative action possible at the time and known to be possible, or was it something that one sees only in retrospect. If the latter, then the claim of a

missed opportunity is weakened since it rests on the argument that alternative action could have and should have been seen at the time. Missed opportunities that rest too heavily on hindsight carry less plausibility but, of course, such claims should not be dismissed if one wants to draw useful lessons from such experiences. An after-the-fact identification of an action or strategy not known or considered at the time can still be useful in drawing lessons.

Missed opportunities differ, too, depending upon whether the alternative is a simple, circumscribed action or whether it is a sequence of actions over time. In the latter case, counterfactual reasoning involves a long, complex chain of causation involving many variables and conditions, all of which would have to fall into place at the right time for the missed opportunity to be realized. The plausibility of a missed opportunity is enhanced, in contrast, when the chain of causation is shorter and less complicated. A missed opportunity is obviously less plausible when it rests on the belief or expectation that a different set of actions could have occurred over time and overcome a series of obstacles, thereby achieving a successful outcome.

The second question: Was there at least one or a few decisive turning points? Those who take a "path dependent" view of history point to the importance of "branching points" in a developing situation. At such points, once events start down a certain path, all possible future outcomes are not equally probable. If an analyst who asserts that there was a missed opportunity does not provide a plausible scenario of how the outcome would have been more favorable, then it is not yet a strong candidate for a plausible missed opportunity.

Those of us interested in assessing possible missed opportunities more rigorously may find it useful, if not indeed necessary, to keep such distinctions in mind. At the same time, we believe that the difficulties of assessing missed opportunities should not discourage us from efforts to do so. It is not that we are interested in rewriting history per se. Rather, careful study of possible missed opportunities is necessary if we are to learn from experience.[34]

CONCLUSION

This paper has argued that policymakers must cultivate an integrated strategy that develops potential responses with anticipated warnings. The need to do so will only increase as publics increasingly expect their governments to do something about crises that they surely see coming. We believe that it has become implausible for Western governments to claim that they "didn't know" that something on a scale of Bosnia or Rwanda could happen. Similarly, claims that "nothing could be done" ring hollow when coming from such advanced, wealthy states. These states cannot prevent every conflict, but they would do well to strengthen their ability to act responsibly and in a timely manner.

Notes and References

1. The changing dimensions of information gathering and response are highlighted in two *Foreign Affairs* articles by Joseph Nye. Nye notes that as warning indicators become more diffuse and complex, "information about what is occurring becomes a central commodity of international relations, just as the threat and use of military force was seen as the central power resource in an international system overshadowed by the potential clash of superpowers." Nye suggests that international coalitions will, in the future, be based on "the ability quickly to reduce the ambiguity of violent situations, to respond flexibly, and to use force, where necessary, with precision and accuracy." Joseph Nye and William Owens, "America's Information Edge," *Foreign Affairs 75*, no. 2 (March/April 1996), pp. 20-36; and Joseph Nye, "Peering into the Future," *Foreign Affairs 73*, no. 4 (July/August 1994), pp. 82-93. See also Gregory F. Treverton, "Estimating Beyond the Cold War," *Defense Intelligence Journal* 3 (1994), pp. 5-20.

2. See for example, Pauline H. Baker and John A. Ausink, "State Collapse and Ethnic Violence: Toward a Predictive Model," *Parameters 26*, no. 1 (1996); "Early Warning of Communal Conflicts and Humanitarian Crises," Proceedings of a workshop held at the Center for International Development and Conflict Management, University of Maryland, November 5-6, 1993, *Journal of Ethno-Development 4*, no. 1 (July 1994); Ted Robert Gurr, "Early Warning Systems: From Surveillance to Assessment to Action," in *Preventive Diplomacy*, ed. Kevin M. Cahill (New York: Basic Books, 1996); Robert Kennedy, "Warning for National Response in the 21st Century," *Strategic Outreach Conference Report*, Strategic Studies Institute, US Army War College (August 18-19, 1994); Mary McCarthy, "The National Warning System: Striving for an Elusive Goal," *Defense Intelligence Journal 3*, no. 1 (1994); Jurjen van der Vlugt and Klaas van Walraven, "Conflict Prevention and Early Warning in the Political Practice of International Organizations," Netherlands Institute of International Relations (February 1996); and Robert I. Rotberg, ed., *Vigilance and Vengeance: NGOs Preventing Ethnic Conflict in Divided Societies* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 1996).

A number of countries are struggling to improve their capacity to foresee, and respond to, humanitarian and political crises in the post-Cold War era. For an example of national efforts to understand and develop a response to longer-term changing international circumstances, see *Canada 21: Canada and Common Security in the Twenty-First Century* (The Center for International Studies, University of Toronto, 1994).

For an incisive, documented analysis of the warning-response gap in dealing with humanitarian emergencies, see "Global Humanitarian Emergencies 1995," released by the United States Mission to the UN (January 1995). The so-called "Norwegian Model" offers an example of successful government-NGO cooperation to overcome this gap. The framework for Norwegian efforts is provided by the Norwegian Emergency Preparedness System (NOREPS) and Norwegian Resource Bank for Democracy and Human Rights (NORDEM), which provide flexible stand-by arrangements and foster close cooperation between government, voluntary, and academic agencies.

3. This need was succinctly recognized in the report of The Commission on Global Governance: "Although the need for collection, analysis, and dissemination of information cannot be overemphasized, *an even more important task is to initiate action on the basis of information*

providing early warning of possible conflicts." Our Global Neighborhood (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), p. 98, emphasis added.

4. This division is clearly demonstrated by the overwhelming -- and often criticized -- intelligence community emphasis on information gathering at the expense of analysis. According to a recent report, 90 percent of the classified intelligence budget of U.S. agencies is used for the collection of data, while less than 10 percent goes toward the analysis of this information. See the report of the Twentieth Century Fund Task Force on the Future of U.S. Intelligence, In *From the Cold* (New York: Twentieth Century Fund Press, 1996). Also, the report of the Commission on the Roles and Capabilities of the United States Intelligence Community, *Preparing for the 21st Century: An Appraisal of U.S. Intelligence* (March 1, 1996).

5. While this seems true of policy professionals, senior policymakers seem to be more divided on the optimal degree of separation between intelligence and policy. The 1995 debate over John Deutch's appointment as director of Central Intelligence with Cabinet rank points up the ambivalence. While most observers applauded his appointment as DCI, many intelligence experts have been critical of the decision to award him Cabinet rank, arguing that its political nature could impede Deutch's ability to offer objective intelligence, especially in times of crisis. Political analysts appear to have a greater understanding of the president's motives. For a general discussion of the separation between collection and analysis on the one hand and the policymaker on the other, see Richard K. Betts, "Policy-makers and Intelligence Analysts: Love, Hate or Indifference?" *Intelligence and National Security 3*, no. 1 (January 1988), pp. 184-189.

6. A survey of recent newspaper articles and editorials bears this point out. From Chechnya to Yugoslavia to Rwanda, members of the press and public have argued that these conflicts were preventable and have lamented the lack of initiative taken by leading governments and international organizations to head off such disasters.

7. Indeed, lack of timely or adequate intelligence has been blamed for everything from Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in 1990 to the failure to warn airline passengers of information that terrorists have targeted a particular carrier. See, for example, Jim Wolf, "Embattled CIA Nominee Acknowledges U.S. Intelligence Failures," *Washington Post*, October 4, 1991; John Mintz, "Intelligence Blamed in Saudi Attack; Military Officials Dispute Hill Report on Fatal Dhahran Bombing; Hill Report Faults U.S. Deference to Saudi Hosts," Washington Post, August 15, 1996; David B. Ottaway, "U.S. Considers Slugging It Out With International Terrorism; Aides Split on Whether to Target Groups or States That Sponsor Them," *Washington Post*, October 17, 1996.

8. Gordon W. Prange with Katherine V. Dillon and Donald Goldstein, *Pearl Harbor: The Verdict of History* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1986), see especially pp. 549-551.

9. Although that is not to say that policymakers do not want to know that such events are imminent, only that when compared to direct national threats, these contingencies are simply deemed less important.

10. As will be discussed later in the paper, there were a number of short-term and long-term signals that demonstrated the threat of military action by Iraq. Though many in mid-1990 may have been surprised by the timing and scope of Iraq's action, the mobilization of its army on the Kuwaiti border was no secret. For a detailed discussion of these warning signals, see Bruce Jentleson, *With Friends Like These: Reagan, Bush, and Saddam, 1982-1990* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1994), especially pp. 167-176.

11. This section draws from Chapter 20 of A.L. George and R. Smoke, *Deterrence in American Foreign Policy: Theory and Practice* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1974); and from A.L. George, "Warning and Response: Theory and Practice," in *International Violence: Terrorism, Surprise and Control*, ed., Yair Evron (Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1979). For a useful summary and interpretation of the results of laboratory studies, see Joseph De Rivera, *The Psychological Dimension of Foreign Policy* (Columbus, Ohio: C.E. Merrill Publishing Co., 1968), pp. 53ff.

12. A number of off-the-record discussions with analysts and policymakers familiar with the relationship between the intelligence and policy communities have noted the sometimes notorious competition among the various intelligence agencies for primacy in informing the policy process. Assessments of potential crisis situations find agencies at times in sharp disagreement with one another regarding the likely outcome. Such sustained disagreement often leads, over time, to the marginalization of the agency that is at odds with the intelligence agency offering the estimates that reinforce the policy inclinations of the key decision makers.

13. See, for example, Glenn D. Paige, *The Korean Decision* (New York: Free Press, 1968), especially pp. 349-352. Ample warning is acknowledged by Truman in *Years of Trial and Hope, 1946-1952, vol. 2, Memoirs* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1956), p. 331.

14. Burton I. Kaufman, *The Korean War* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1986), p. 33.

15. Allen Whiting concluded that both Washington and Beijing miscalculated the danger of each other's position: the U.S. underestimated Chinese warnings against moving across the 38th parallel; China, for its part, overestimated the threat to its security of UN troops crossing the 38th parallel; in *China Crosses the Yalu* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1960), see especially pp. 163-172. Whiting updated the study, making use of newly declassified materials, in his "The U.S.-China War in Korea," in *Avoiding War: Problems of Crisis Management*, ed., A. L. George (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1991), pp. 103-125.

16. Avi Shlaim, *The United States and the Berlin Blockade, 1948-1949* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1983), pp. 415-416.

17. Baghdad Radio, July 17, 1990, cited in Lawrence Freedman and Efraim Karsh, *The Gulf Conflict 1990-1991* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993), p. 48.

18. "Kuwait: How the West Blundered," in *The Gulf War Reader*, eds., Christopher Cerf and Micah L. Sifry (New York: Times Books, 1991), pp. 99-106. Originally published in *The Economist* (September 29, 1990).

19. Jentleson, *With Friends Like These*, pp. 173-174 (see note 10).

20. A number of sources have included discussions of, and excerpts from, the meeting between Ambassador Glaspie and Saddam Hussein, including Jentleson, *With Friends Like These*, pp. 169-171; and Freedman and Karsh, *The Gulf Conflict 1990-1991*, pp. 51-55.

21. See, for example, Freedman and Karsh, *The Gulf Conflict 1990-1991*, p. 63; Jentleson, *With Friends Like These*; "Kuwait: How the West Blundered," in *The Gulf War Reader*.

22. Africa Watch, "Rwanda: Talking Peace and Waging War: Human Rights Since the October 1990 Invasion" (February 27, 1992).

23. John Erikkson, *The International Response to Conflict and Genocide: Lessons from the Rwanda Experience*, Synthesis Report (Copenhagen: Steering Committee of the Joint Evaluation of Emergency Assistance to Rwanda, March 1996), p. 21.

24. Holly J. Burkhalter, "The Question of Genocide: The Clinton Administration and Rwanda," *World Policy Journal* 11, no. 4 (Winter 1994/95), pp. 44-54, originally quoted in Keith Richburg, "Witnesses Describe Cold Campaign of Killing in Rwanda," Washington Post, 8 May 1994. For additional studies of the Rwandan genocide, see Howard Adelman and Astri Surhke, *The International Response to Conflict and Genocide: Lessons from the Rwanda Experience*, Study 2: Early Warning and Conflict Management (Copenhagen: Steering Committee of the Joint Evaluation of Emergency Assistance to Rwanda, 1996); Alain Destexhe, *Rwanda and Genocide in the Twentieth Century* (New York: New York University Press, 1995); Gerard Prunier, *The Rwanda Crisis: History of a Genocide* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995). For an incisive critique of bureaucratic phenomena that accompanied the UN's sluggishness, written by the person specializing on Rwanda in the U.S. Mission to the United Nations, see Michael N. Barnett, "The Politics of Indifference at the United Nations: The Security Council, Peacekeeping and Genocide in Rwanda," forthcoming in *Cultural Anthropology*.

25. Likewise, it is not difficult to find excuses not to act. In Rwanda, for example, even in the aftermath of genocide, the limited U.S. contribution of armored personnel carriers to UNAMIR was delayed for two months while the State Department haggled with the UN over compensation for the vehicles.

26. Such reluctance may be a Western phenomenon. In an essay prepared for the Carnegie Commission on Preventing Deadly Conflict, former Soviet president Mikhail Gorbachev argues that the response tendency in many former bloc states, as well as other repressive regimes, tends to be exactly the opposite: knee-jerk crackdowns. The essay, "Nonviolent Leadership," is part of a volume that the Commission is preparing on the role of leadership in preventing deadly conflict.

27. This difficulty is highlighted, for example, in Ted Robert Gurr and Barbara Harff, "Conceptual, Research and Policy Issues in Early Warning Research: An Overview," *The Journal of Ethno-Development* 4, no. 1; also, Janie Leatherman and Raimo Vyrynen, "Structure,

Culture and Territory: Three Sets of Warning Indicators," paper prepared for the 36th Annual Convention of the International Studies Association, Chicago, IL, February 21-25, 1995.

28. The "cry wolf" dilemma in warning and response is cogently summarized by William Zartman: "The biggest problem in the early warning debate is not whether an event is preceded by warning signals but whether warning signals are followed by an event. There are many more prior indications than there are ensuing events; many warning signals simply fizzle and seemingly impending events work themselves out . . . What is needed is tornado warnings that announce tornados but also that do not announce non-tornados. The corridors of policy-makers reverberate with cries of `wolf!'" I. William Zartman, "Preventing State Collapse: The Argument," draft paper, Working Group on Collapsed States, The Johns Hopkins University, Washington, DC, November 1996.

Other observers have noted that while greater vigilance in warning and response does result in an increase in "cry wolf" outcomes, errors of this type are preferable to extremely costly failures resulting from lack of attention to developing events.

29. *Our Global Neighborhood*, pp. 94-95 (see note 3).

30. A number of experienced intelligence and policy specialists have endorsed the need for developing a response "repertoire" that includes a wide array of responses, some small, possibly covert, and low cost, others large, public, and more costly. The rationale that "the response must fit the warning" is a simple one, but not one easily realized. The response repertoire, of course, should include the many different responses that can be made by nongovernmental organizations. See, for example, the remarks by John Brinkerhoff in *Strategic Outreach Conference Report: Warning for National Responses in the 21st Century*, SSI/Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College (August 18-19, 1994). See also the study by Michael Lund, *Preventing Violent Conflicts: A Strategy for Preventive Diplomacy* (Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1996).

31. A recent World Bank report provides a very interesting example of the possible utility of differentiating early warning signals with respect to identifying (a) different possible adverse consequences, and (b) appropriate preventive actions for each such consequence. Nat J. Colletta, Markus Kostner, and Ingo Wiederhofer, *The Transition from War to Peace in Sub-Saharan Africa* (Washington, DC: The World Bank, 1996), see especially pp. 32-38.

32. These cues do not necessarily need to occur to be foreseeable; indeed early preventive measures may mean that they never occur.

33. See, for example, Philip E. Tetlock and Aaron Belkin, *Counterfactual Thought Experiments in World Politics* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996).

34. This is the objective of a study for the Carnegie Commission on Preventing Deadly Conflict, *Opportunities Missed, Opportunities Seized: Preventive Diplomacy in the Post-Cold War World*, directed and edited by Bruce W. Jentleson, to be published in late 1997 by Rowman & Littlefield

(Boulder, CO). Some problems of obtaining and using warning by NGOs in humanitarian crises are discussed in Robert I. Rotberg, ed., Vigilance and Vengeance (see note 2).

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