

**TOWARDS RESPONSE-ORIENTED EARLY WARNING ANALYSIS:  
POLICY AND OPERATIONAL CONSIDERATIONS**

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**ABSTRACT**

The connection between conflict early warning and early response is here explored as a problem of policy-relevant analysis. The paper argues that while many advocates and researchers in the early warning field decry the absence of "political will", the fact remains that much of what currently exists as early warning is not adequately presented to policy-makers. This involves both clear analysis of critical trigger factors, and better targeting of these analyses such that they are readily utilised by policy end-users. The paper argues that current conflict early warning practices are not effective in presenting dynamic analysis that prioritises factors and presents practicable options for preventive peacebuilding. To illustrate this argument, a framework for early warning analysis is outlined in brief. Based on ongoing research in the Canadian foreign ministry, this framework focuses on seven political early warning categories: status of governance/political process; polarisation/potential for conflict; structural/societal tension; human rights violations; military/arms supply; external support; and context-specific considerations. Improvements in policy response-oriented analysis will demand better interaction between early warning researchers, field monitors, and policy analysts in governments, aid agencies, and regional and international organisations. The paper concludes with some observations in this regard, and a brief review of some existing initiatives which perhaps embody this sort of interaction. Written from the perspective of a conflict analyst in the Canadian foreign ministry, the paper is informed by current policy and operational requirements for "early response" and preventive peacebuilding.

**The views expressed in this paper are those of the author and do not necessarily  
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