

operations (from the Congo<sup>45</sup> to the former Yugoslavia) have shown the utility of 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.<sup>46</sup> The current capacity of the Information and Research Unit of the DPKO Situation Centre already assists considerably in many non-peace-keeping tasks, including early warning. In a CMIC, the capacity for analysis could be used in the spectrum of UN roles (including, early warning, peace-keeping, and humanitarian assistance, as well as possibly arms control verification).

**\* Issuing reports on early warning should become a regular activity both within the Secretariat (i.e., reports to the Secretary General) and to the Member States (i.e., in reports from the Secretary General).**

Comment: To establish a new "early warning" norm, which will help to make the UN a more proactive body, reporting should be regular, even if there are no early warnings to make. One possibility would be to include a section on potential 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, both in the formal and the 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 part of his service.

The UN Secretary-General is now positioned better than ever before to engage in early warning. There are early warning mandates from the Security Council and the General Assembly. The UN possesses better information systems than ever before. In addition, there appear to be progressive movers within the UN's international civil service and a new Secretary-General who is thoroughly familiar and experienced with the UN's role in peace-keeping. A lot will now depend on his progressive, proactive nature and the receptivity of UN member states.

Will the UN maintain its habitual pattern of *reacting* to conflicts instead being *proactive* in an attempt to warn and preempting them? If the new Secretary-General sees a new era, ripe for an expanded UN mandate, then there is every possibility for hope. Then Article 99 will be not merely a theoretical possibility, seldom used, but a living provision of the UN Charter and an additional tool to save the world from much misery and suffering. UN early warning is surely an idea whose time has come.