

then refusing to act on the information. Rather, it addresses the facile political ploy of claiming not to have been informed and implying that effective steps would have been taken if only they had known. The optimum solution of course is to have some form of 'signing off' process, so decision makers know that at a later date they will not be able to easily deny accountability.

A partial solution is that certain early warning mechanisms be standard operational procedure. International officials, triggered by certain types of events, would officially alert political decision makers as to possible developments along with concrete proposals to preempt crises and catastrophes. Political decision makers would be expected to respond to or at least acknowledge receipt.

In this regard, the Secretary General has inordinate ability to press intelligence upon the UN member states and to expect some response. Whether he wants to is a completely different question. However, he has implied many times during the Rwandan crisis that the SC and various countries were just not listening to him. It has been suggested that if that is truly so, that he should have had recourse to Art 99 which allows him to "bring to the attention of the Security Council any matter which in his opinion may threaten the maintenance of international peace and security". Article 99 has only been used once or twice in the past 50 years, so prefacing his communications with reference to Article 99 would serve to alert all as to its' dramatic seriousness. Overuse would depreciate its value, but responsible and limited recourse to Article 99 would create a new breed of early warning, ie. 'an Article 99 communication'.

Another solution to political gridlock would be for certain early warning reactions to be standard operational procedure. UN officials would have a legislated right and duty, triggered by certain types of events, to initiate lower level crisis responses or crisis preparedness unless specifically instructed to the contrary by political superiors. eg. preparing peacekeeping contingency plans, seeking troop or equipment commitments, stockpiling equipment close to the crisis, sending in technical missions.

A key question is just where and how clearly can the line can be drawn between political responses and administrative responses? However failure to draw some line only makes for confusion about the division of mandates and responsibilities, which in turn serves to obscure who is accountable for taking action on early warnings. It is also inevitable that many cautious UN officials without a clear mandate will simply refer everything up the line, the perfect recipe for inaction.

In conclusion, there was more than enough intelligence about what was happening in Rwanda to have alerted everyone as to the need to be prepared for a possible crisis. It is not as clear that there was sufficient warning to merit substantively more preemptive action prior to April 6. But after April 6th, should we have been better prepared to respond? The answer is absolutely yes. If we had, could we have made a difference? Again, as the next section will discuss, the answer seems to be absolutely yes.