

CONFLICT EARLY WARNING AND EARLY RESPONSE
MECHANISMS IN THE I.G.A.D.SUB-REGION: AN ANALYSIS OF
THE ETHIOPIA-ERITREA CONFLICT, 1996-2000

By

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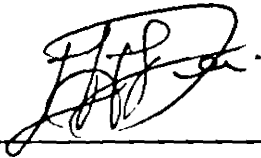
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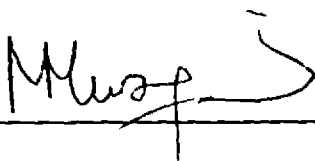
Declaration

Apart from citations, this dissertation is my original work and has not been presented for the award of a degree in any other University.

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This dissertation has been submitted for examination with my approval as a University supervisor.

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Dedication

**In memory of My Dad
Wenani Wamulaku Manyilomo**

Your struggle in life was inspiring and worth emulating. Your acquisition of knowledge among your peers was unparalleled. Even in this challenging environment, few stand out to be counted and from your family, I have chosen to do so. Your advice has remained a guiding principle in my life. This one is meant for you.

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Abstract

The impetus of this study emanated from the quest to shift the focus from reactive management of conflict to proactive prevention of conflict. This shift lays emphasis on the significance of sub-regional organisations in conflict early warning and early response. This is because these organizations are familiar with regional conflicts and their proximity to conflict theatre enhances layered response to conflict.

The study reviewed relevant secondary data on conflict early warning and based its analysis on the Ethiopia-Eritrea conflict (1996-2000) as a case study. The study builds on the theoretical discourses on conflict early warning and early response, and delves into whether the existence of early warning would have impaired or enhanced transformation of Ethiopia-Eritrea conflict. Indicators of potential conflicts are highlighted and explicated. The overall objective of the study is to analyse the role of early warning and response mechanisms in the prevention and management of conflict.

The study observes that conflict preventive strategies are predicated on conflict information and structured on conflict cycle. The study underscores the challenges to conflict prevention and emphasizes the need to understand both structural and dynamic causes of conflict in designing conflict early warning systems. The centrality of information, resources, decision-making and political will in effecting early response to conflict is observed. The study concludes by recommending areas where further research is needed to enhance effective conflict prevention.

List of Abbreviations

UN.....	United Nation
OAU.....	Organization of African Unity
I.G.A.D.....	Intergovernmental Authority on Development
EW.....	Early Warning
CEW.....	Conflict Early Warning Committee
EU.....	European Union
FEWER.....	Forum For Early Warning and Early Response
EWM.....	Early Warning Model
IGO.....	Intergovernmental Organization
HEW.....	Hard Early Warning Model
SEW.....	Soft Early Warning Model
EPLF.....	Eritrean Peoples Liberation Front
TPLF.....	Tigrayan Peoples Liberation Front
EPRDF.....	Ethiopian Peoples Revolutionary Democratic Front
TGE.....	Transitional Government of Ethiopia
PGE.....	Provisional Government of Eritrea
EPRP.....	Ethiopian Peoples Revolutionary Party
OLF.....	Oromo Liberation Front
FDRE.....	Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
ECOWAS.....	Economic Community of West African States
CEWERU.....	Conflict Early Warning and Early Response Units
CEWARN.....	Conflict Early Warning and Early Response Mechanism
SADC.....	South African Development Co-operation
ECOSOC.....	United Nations Economic and Social Council
UNDHA.....	United Nations Department of Humanitarian Affairs

CHAPTER ONE

BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Introduction

Although the end of the Cold War gave some hope for lasting peace the world over, it was nevertheless short-lived hope. This is evidenced by events such as Iraqi's invasion of Kuwait in 1990, the Yugoslavian civil wars of the 1990's and the Rwandan genocide of 1994 destroyed the international peace euphoria of the post-Cold War period. The U.N capacity to manage conflicts seems to have been overwhelmed and impaired in the ever increasing and diverse conflicts all over the world. In spite of this impairment, the U.N is mandated in the charter "to remove and prevent the threat to international peace and security".¹

Conflicts in Africa have pervaded and manifested themselves in various forms and intensity. This has ranged from struggle for political power and leadership to struggle for territorial expansion. This has impacted negatively on human life, the destruction of property and environmental degradation. Although conflict is endemic, it can be prevented from degenerating into violence if appropriate institutions and mechanisms are put in place.

The management of conflict continues to pose serious and formidable challenges to Africa in this 21st century.² Various arguments have been

¹ See Article 1 of The Charter of the United Nation and Statute of the International Court of Justice

² See The World Bank, Can Africa Claim The 21st Century? (Washington D.C, The World Bank, 2000) p 61

advanced for the inadequacy of existing mechanisms for conflict management. One of these is the restricted state-approach to the analysis of internal and external causes of conflicts.³ Another one has been the tendency to utilize reactionary management responses after the conflict has ripened.⁴

These arguments raise questions as to whether these apparent inadequacies of the current mechanisms are due to an incomprehensive overall strategy of conflict prevention or improper information on the impending violence and the degree of political will to act. Although Jose De Cuellar had set an early warning unit in the UN secretariat, it was only intended to focus on anticipating humanitarian disasters. It is only in light of the failures mentioned above, particularly the Rwandan genocide, that the idea was resurrected and institutionalised once again in the UNDHA. The then U.N Secretary-General, Boutros Boutros Ghali, revived the idea of preventing violent conflicts based on early warning and accurate information.⁵ This led to a shift towards early warning system as an integral process of managing conflict. Subsequently, the U.N and other regional organizations (OAU) now (AU) and sub-regional organizations (IGAD) strove to develop early warning mechanisms.

The peaceful relations between Eritrea–Ethiopia have remained elusive since the end of Eritrea's war of secession from Ethiopia in 1993. A renewal of conflict between these two independent states began towards the end of 1996. Eventually, this conflict degenerated into war on 6th May 1998 and formally ended on 12th Dec 2000 when both parties signed a framework

³ D.k Orwa, "Causes of Conflicts in the Relations of African States" in O.J.C.B Ojo et al, *African International Relations*. (London and New York, Longman, 1985) p 130

⁴ I.W. Zartman *Ripe for Resolution: Conflict and Intervention in Africa*, (New York, Oxford University press, 1989) p 267

⁵ B.B Ghali, *An Agenda for Peace: Preventive Diplomacy, Peacemaking and Peacekeeping*, (New York, United Nations, 1992) p 14

on peace agreement in Algiers, Algeria.⁶ The study retrospectively explores various steps that led to this conflict and raises the question: had there been an early warning system, what difference would it have made to the conflict? To this extent, the study focuses on the influence of early warning and possible response initiatives. The intent of the study is to capture the differences that early warning would have made on the prevention and management of this conflict.

Statement of the Problem

Human interactions are embedded in conflicts. These interactions can result into either beneficial or harmful conflicts depending on compatibility or incompatibility of goals of the parties involved.⁷ Despite various efforts in managing and resolving a number of conflicts, there is need for continuous monitoring and appropriate responses to evolving conflict. Effective prevention of conflict is only possible when early attention is focused on potential generating causes of a conflict. However, conflict conditions preceding violence are dynamic.

Conflict management methods mainly used all over the world have tended to be retroactive rather than proactive. This possibly explains the difficulty in minimizing the prevalence of conflicts in Africa.⁸ On the other hand, there has been under-utilization or outright neglect by conflict preventive efforts in Africa in using early warning as a tool for preventing

⁶ P. Martin, "Towards a Cold Peace: The Outcome of the Ethiopia-Eritrea War of 1998-2000" in Review of African Political Economy, No 87, 2001. PP 125-129

⁷ See I.W. Zartman "Conflict Resolution: Prevention Management and Resolution" in Deng M.F and Zartman W.I, (eds.), Conflict Resolution in Africa, [Washington D.C, The Brookings Institute, 1991] p299

⁸ M Mwagiru, Conflict and Peace Management in the Horn of Africa: Theoretical and Practical Perspectives, November 1996(Revised 1998) at [www.plougshares.ca/content/Build % 20 Peace/Mwagiru IRG96.html](http://www.plougshares.ca/content/Build%20Peace/Mwagiru%20IRG96.html) p2

conflict. Therefore, there is need to adequately analyse the role these two reinforcing processes of early warning of conflict and various intervention efforts play in the effective management of conflict.

The post cold war era attests to the need to shift from resolving specific manifest conflicts to the institutionalisation of long-term mechanisms of preventing potential conflicts.⁹ By using the Ethiopia-Eritrea conflict, this study will probe a germane question of whether the existence of an early warning mechanism would have made any difference in the response to the conflict. Might the international community have responded better had there been an early warning system to generate clearer anticipation of the impending conflict?¹⁰ Could the existence of early warning have impaired or enhanced conflict transformation/prevention? Given the structure of CEWARN, how effective would it have been in averting the conflict?

Understandably, the increased international involvement in addressing conflicts, juxtaposed with the tendency of conflicts to appear unaffected by conflict management efforts other than early warning and response mechanism has increasingly raised an important question: what kind of approaches are actually effective in the conflict prevention? This has led to shifting of emphasis towards conflict early warning as a tool of conflict prevention. The idea of developing early warning system as a way of preventing conflict has received a great deal of attention not only within the U.N, but also in regional and sub-regional organizations:-

⁹ See J S Stedman, "Conflicts and Conflict Resolution in Africa: A Conceptual Framework" in Deng M.F and Zartman W.I, (eds.), Conflict Resolution in Africa op cit. PP 367-399

¹⁰ This question is posed in Adelma H et al. The Response to Conflict and Genocide: Lessons from The Rwanda Experiences, (Early Warning and Conflict Management Joint Evaluation of Emergence Assistance to Rwanda vol. 2, 1996) p 71

Although it is acknowledged that the current conflicts in the Horn of Africa conflict system¹¹ have important repercussions for stability in the region, the problem that has been rarely addressed is about the proper conflict prevention strategies. It is quite clear from various examples: [Kuwait (1990), Bosnia (1992), and Rwanda (1994)] that had there been early warning and corresponding early intervention, conflict could have been averted. Similarly, the question posed in this study is: had there been early warning system, what difference would it have made to the destructive conflict between Ethiopia-Eritrea? This question, therefore, shall form the focus of this study.

Objectives of the study

Broadly stated, the study aims to analyse the role of early warning and response mechanisms in the prevention and management of conflict. The specific guiding objectives are as follows:

- (i) To examine the significance of early warning and response mechanisms in preventing conflict.
- (ii) To assess the effectiveness of early warning and response mechanisms in mitigating conflict.

Justification of the study

Contrary to the expectation that there would be a reduction in the number of conflicts with the end of the Cold War, the 1990s saw a resurgence of both internal and to some extent interstate conflicts. This has tended to threaten international peace and security especially in vulnerable and fragile states in

¹¹ M Mwaqiru, Conflict: Theory, Processes and Institutions of Management. (Nairobi: Watermark, Publications, 2000) p 79

Africa. Consequently, conflicts have adversely affected African countries' development. The only way forward is to have effective mechanisms to avert further conflicts.

Most efforts that are currently in use have been largely reactive and only activated during and after the violence. Having knowledge of conflict cycles and spirals helps in designing feasible conflict prevention strategies. As Mitchell¹² notes, cycles of conflict, consist of a series of linked "episodes" over different issues, each set off by a triggering event followed by conflict behaviour and consequences for participants and issues. Residual memories of previous episodes, the attitudes and perceptions affect subsequent episodes. Preventive strategies should therefore focus on attitudes, behaviour, and establishment of early warning mechanism that militates against the use of disruptive violent behaviour. Since early warning embraces a new shift in conflict management, the study aims to contribute to an emerging yet promising research field. By using the Ethiopia-Eritrea as a case study, the study will contribute to the theoretical knowledge of conflict prevention and attendant practical problems related to the nascent early warning and response mechanisms in Africa.

Literature Review

The relevant literature of this study is sub-divided into three sections: literature on conflict, early warning, and the Horn of Africa.

¹² C.R Mitchell, The Structure of International Conflict, (London, Macmillan, 1998) PP 66-80

Literature on conflict

Mitchell¹³ observes that conflict arises wherever two or more parties have incompatible goals about something. Similarly, Makumi¹⁴ argues that in the course of human interaction conflict is inevitable. This reality poses a challenge in regard to elimination or efficient and effective management of violent conflict. Bakweseghe¹⁵ observes that societies have always been in potential or actual conflict because some segments of the population yearn for change while others fear the same. The issue, therefore, is not the prevention of conflict but the prevention and mitigation of violent conflict.

Bennett¹⁶ opines that sustainable prevention of regional conflicts requires a comprehensive regional approach. This is because the multiplicity and variety of actors involved in generating conflicts requires a similar multiplicity of international partners to resolve them. Vasquez¹⁷ observes that territorial contiguity has been a source of potential conflict and contention. This implies that human proclivities toward territoriality are fundamental factors that drive collectivities to take actions that eventually result in war. Further, Mamdani¹⁸ argues that the system of membership in states inherited from the colonial system have been institutionalised and incorporated in post-

¹³ See C R Mitchell, *The Structure of International Conflict* op cit. PP 15-25

¹⁴ M Mwagiru "Introduction" in Mwagiru M et al, *Understanding Conflict and It's Management*, (Nairobi, Centre for Conflict Research, 1998) p 1

¹⁵ C.J Bakweseghe, "Conflict Resolution in Africa: A New Role for The Organization of African Unity" in Sorbo G.M and Vale P (eds.), *Out of Conflict: From War to Peace in Africa*, (Uppsala, Nordiska, Afrkainstitutet, 1997) p 80

¹⁶ R.R Bennett, "Introduction: Experiences in Prevention" in Rubin B.R, *Cases and Strategies for Preventive Action*, (New York, The Century Foundation Press, 1998) p 14

¹⁷ A.J Vasquez, *The War Puzzle*, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1993) pp.124-133

¹⁸ For a detailed discussion see M, Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers: Colonialism, Nativism, and The Genocide in Rwanda*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001)

colonial states and have become a prime cause of violent conflict that can only be addressed regionally.

Zartman¹⁹ argues that there are two types of border problems: territorial disputes over the location of the border itself and relational problems about the conditions of existence near the border. Stedman²⁰ notes that violence is not an inherent aspect of conflict but rather a potential form conflict may take. He is of the view that there should be institutionalised mechanisms to manage conflicts. On the other hand, Grandvoinnet²¹ maintains that the challenge lies more in managing conflict rather than striving to prevent conflicts, which are endemic in human relations. Ossiya²² notes that conflict prevention; management and resolution should no longer be an exclusive reserve for international organizations.

Toure²³ opines that although emergency interventions may sometimes make it possible to obtain a provisional peace or to delay the outbreak of fighting, they seem not to create a propitious environment for conflict resolution. Scharf²⁴ observes that central to an effective capability to prevent conflict is the capacity to identify, monitor and analyse long-term underlying causes. Recognition of the complexity of conflicts is essential to the type of

¹⁹ I.W Zartman "Conflict Reduction: Prevention Management and Resolution" in Deng M.F and Zartman W.I, [eds.], Conflict Resolution in Africa, [Washington D.C, The Brookings Institute, 1991] p 304

²⁰ S.J Stedman, "Conflict and Conflict Resolution in Africa: A Conceptual Framework" in Deng, F.M and Zartman, I W [eds.], Conflict Resolution in Africa op cit. p 377.

²¹ H. Grandvoinnet and H Scheider, "Improving Analysis and Action" in Grandvoinnet H and Schneider H [eds.], Conflict Management in Africa: A Permanent Challenge, [Paris, O.E.C.D, 1998] pp. 12-23.

²² D.J Ossiya, "Constructing Conflict Capacities" in New Routes: A Journal of Peace Research and Action Vol. 4, No 4 1999 pp. 8-11.

²³ A.T Toure, "Conflict Prevention and Management in Africa" in Grandvoinnet H and Scheider H, [eds.], Conflict Management in Africa: A Permanent Challenge, op cit. P 50

²⁴ R Scharf, "Key Findings of the O.E.C.D-DRC Task Force on Conflict, Peace and Development Co-operation: The Imperative of Conflict Prevention" in Grandvoinnet H and Schneider H (eds.), Conflict Management in Africa: A Permanent Challenge, [Paris, O.E.C.D, 1998] p 113

response initiatives. Some scholars however, contend that some conflicts are necessary for states to try to define their borders and other prerequisites of national interest, while others need prevention owing to their intensity and expanse. Zartman²⁵ differentiates conflict as an underlying issue in disputes between parties from crises, which is an active outbreak of armed hostilities. Consequently, management seeks either to prevent conflict from erupting into crisis or to pacify a crisis in eruption.

However, other scholars distinguish a crisis from conflict based on abstract systemic transformation, risk level of war or some aggressive decisions. Young²⁶, for instance, defines a crisis as a series of events that unfold rapidly and that have a destabilizing effect (which increases the likelihood of violence) in the international system or any of the sub-system. Brecher²⁷ and Lebow²⁸ approach crises from a decision-making perspective and argue that a crisis involves a threat to basic values, high probability of involvement in military hostilities and finite time for response to external value threat. Similarly, Bell²⁹ argues that a crisis is a turning point between states when conflicts rise to a level that threatens and transforms the nature of the relationship.

Snyder and Diesing³⁰ define an international crisis as a sequence of interactions involving two or more sovereign states in a severe conflict with a

²⁵ I.W Zartman, Ripe for Resolution: Conflict and Intervention in Africa, (New York, Oxford University press, 1989)

²⁶ O Young, The Intermediaries: Third Parties in International Crises, (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1968) p 10

²⁷ M Brecher, 'State Behavior in International Crisis', Journal of Conflict Resolution, Vol. 23 (1979) p 447

²⁸ R.N Lebow, Between Peace and War: The Nature of International Crisis [Baltimore, John Hopkins University, 1981] pp 9-12

²⁹ See C Bell, The Conventions of Crisis: A Study in Diplomatic Management [Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1971] pp4-9

³⁰ See Snyder and Diesing, Conflict Among Nations: Bargaining, Decision-making and System Structure in International Crises, (Princeton, Princeton University press, 1977)

dangerously high probability of war. However, Kisiangani³¹ contends that when incompatibility of goals and interests between states rise to a level where decision-makers consider a real possibility of war then conflict turns into a crisis. Thus it is evident from the foregoing observation that beneath every crisis there is conflict. Therefore, international crises are acute international conflicts. Pinteiro³² argues that the key challenges for the international community, as a whole is to overcome the culture of reaction, which currently focuses only on current crisis spots, and instead develop a culture of prevention. Suy³³ similarly observes that the international concern has been largely concerned with limiting the consequences or the duration of the already existing conflicts and only directing international focus towards remedial measure dealing with the immediate situation.

Literature on Early warning

The enormous costs incurred in such places as Rwanda, Yugoslavia, and Somalia among others has persuaded the international community and various organizations to search for a more cost-effective way of preventing conflicts from arising.³⁴ Mwanasali³⁵ defines early warning as those set of activities aimed at the collection, collation and analysis of data in order to detect and identify a pending crisis and forestall the possibility that the crisis

³¹ See E.N. Kisiangani, Language in Diplomacy: A Critical Appraisal of the Rhetoric of Conflict, M.A Dissertation, Institute of Diplomacy & International Studies, University of Nairobi, 2000 p 62

³² J.D Pinteiro, "Europe's Response to Conflicts in Africa", The Courier, No 168 March-April 1998 p 66

³³ E.Suy, "Introduction" in Medicins Sans Frontiers, Conflict in Africa: An analysis of Crisis and Crisis Prevention Measures, [Brussels, King Boudouin Foundation, 1997] p 9

³⁴ Conflict Prevention Newsletter, vol4, No 2, September 2001.p 1

³⁵ M Mwanasali, Early Warning and Conflict Prevention, (A Paper Presented at The Conference on Democratization, Development Management and Conflicts in Africa 23-26 November, 1999, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia). pp. 1-5

may degenerate into uncontrolled violence of conflict. However, this view tends to confuse early warning with the activities aimed at intervention.

Druke³⁶ traces the development of early preventive action to 1950s when Dag Hammarskjöld (then the UN Secretary General) practiced preventive diplomacy with such innovations as "U.N presence" and periodical dispatch of representatives to potentially dangerous areas. Munene³⁷ distinguishes between harmful and beneficial conflict and argues that averting harmful conflict depends on identification and acting on early warning signs of impending conflict at an opportune time. Hobisso³⁸ argues that the current emphasis of humanitarian intervention has only helped to manage conflict instead of effective intervention at the earlier stages of the conflict with the aim of preventing it. Davies³⁹ observes that three early warning systems (Risk assessment system, Conflict early warning system and Humanitarian early warning system) centre on three stages of conflicts: structural tensions, escalation and Humanitarian crisis. Reyhler⁴⁰ asserts that effective early warning systems should provide a double warning: the possibility of conflict escalation and foreseeable negative impact on the interests of other countries or the international community should the intervention be ineffective. In a different article, he advances the view of dynamic analysis of conflict

³⁶ L Druke, "United Nations in Conflict Prevention" in Rubin B.R, Cases and Strategies for Preventive Action, (New York, The Century Foundation Press, 1998) p 33

³⁷ M Munene, "Early Warning Signs of Conflicts" in Mwaqiru M et al (eds.) op cit. P 16

³⁸ T Hobisso and Boii H, Networking with a View to Promoting Peace: Towards Sustainable Peace-Civil Society Dialogue Forum for the Horn of Africa, (Nairobi 10-13 December, 2000 Second Conference, Stiftung, 2001) p 127

³⁹ J Davies, "Conflict Early Warning and Early Response for Sub-Sahara Africa", Summary of Working Draft, Sept, 2000, Prepared for USAID/Tulene Cert. Project

⁴⁰ L Reyhler, "Conflicts in Africa: The Issues of Control and Prevention" in Medicins Sans Frontiers, Conflict in Africa: An Analysis of Crisis and Crisis Prevention Measures, (Brussels, King Boudouin Foundation, 1997) pp. 28-30

transformation as each phase of conflict poses new problems and requires appropriate responses.⁴¹

Reyntjens⁴² argues that late response to conflict from international community is due to lack of political will rather than lack of information. In the same vein, Gordenker⁴³ notes that the usefulness of warning depends on the nature and timing of the warning and its reception by those given responsibility for initiating response. Kuroda⁴⁴ argues that prior knowledge through systematic monitoring of root causes of developing situations could better prepare the concerned policy makers to take timely action aimed at negotiation, prevention or mitigation. Persend⁴⁵ argues that broader preventive strategies should be based on broader network of the sources of information and targets for action in early warning. Dedring⁴⁶ argues for differentiation of early warning in regard to internal and international conflict because of salient features in international affairs that are completely irrelevant for domestic conditions.

Reychler⁴⁷ distinguishes two efforts towards conflict prevention: one of the effort views conflict as undesirable according to the relevant international system, and the other one attempts to limit conflict behaviour within permissible activity. Subsequently, he draws three typologies: measures

⁴¹ L Reychler, "The Crises and Their Causes: The Prevention of Violent Conflicts" in *Medicins Sans Frontiers* op cit pp. 39-64

⁴² F. Reyntjens and A. Pannels, "Preventive Measures-Case Studies, Namibia, Angola, Rwanda, Kenya" in *Medicins Sans Frontiers* op cit pp. 89-90.

⁴³ L Gordenker, "Early Warning: Conceptual and Practical Issues" in Rupesinghe K and Kuroda M (eds), Early Warning and Conflict Resolution, (London, Macmillan press Ltd., 1992) pp. 3-4

⁴⁴ M Kuroda, "Early Warning of the United Nations System: Prospects for the Future" in Rupesinghe K and Kuroda M (ed) Early Warning and Conflict Resolution, op cit p 216

⁴⁵ R.C.G Persend, "Early Warning in United Nations Grand Strategy" in Rupesinghe K and Kuroda M (eds.) Early Warning and Conflict Resolution, op cit pp. 190-192

⁴⁶ J Dedring, "Socio-Political Indicators for Early Warning Purposes" in Rupesinghe K and Kuroda M (eds.) Early Warning and Conflict Resolution, op cit pp. 190-192

dealing with the conflict, opportunity structure and decision-making. Miall⁴⁷ classifies prevention measures into two broad ways: light prevention and deep prevention. In the Post-Cold war conflicts, light prevention is concerned with improving the international capacity to intervene in conflicts before they become violent, while deep prevention means building domestic, regional or international capacity to manage conflict.

Muyangwa⁴⁸ argues that a key element of the early warning system pertains to how warnings of prior knowledge of impending crisis translate into preventive action. Hence, there is a need to complement any early warning system by the political will and the capacity to act expeditiously and decisively. Leatherman⁵⁰ is of the view that the monitoring process should encompass field engagement in order to discern the causes of conflict, cultivate network as a source of power and build coalitions among stakeholders for peace. This is because information to warn about an impending conflict is subject to a political process.

Vogt⁵¹ argues that the important function of any early warning capacity should be the ability to enhance preventive action and to effectively exploit the appropriate entry points of intervention in a conflict. This calls for the development of three levels of information for an early warning system: comprehensive and standard information on each individual state; more

⁴⁷ L. Reyhler, "The Art of Conflict Prevention: Theory and Practice" in Bauwens W and Reyhler L (eds.), The Art of Conflict Prevention, (London-New York, Brassey's, 1994) pp. 4-9

⁴⁸ Mial H et al, Contemporary Conflict Resolution, (Cambridge, Polity Press, 1999) p 97

⁴⁹ M Muyangwa and M A Vogt, An Assessment of the O.A.U Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution 1993-2000, Accessed at www/PublRepo/AfriAssess/print.html. p 24

⁵⁰ Leatherman J, et al, Breaking Cycles of Violence: Conflict Prevention in Intrastate Crises, (Connecticut, Kumarian Press, 1999) pp. 182-195.

⁵¹ M A,Vogt "Conflict Resolution and Peace Keeping: The Organization of African Unity and The United Nations" in Sorbo G.M and Vale P (eds.), Out of Conflict: From War to Peace in Africa , (Uppsala, Nordiska, Afrkainstitutet,1997) pp. 73-74

specialized and focused and more detailed and regular monitoring of violent conflict.

Gurr⁵² argues that early warnings of impending crises should give time to would be interveners to build political support for action, design and implement proactive strategies and plan for assistance and rescue. Lund⁵³ argues that conflict prevention is the pre-emptive timing of actions at pre-violent stages of particular incipient conflicts and it need not be restricted to particular techniques or method of intervention. Salim⁵⁴ argues that regionalism as a sustainable framework for curbing outbreaks of conflict depends primarily upon the nature of conflict. Consequently, localization is essentially a management function to confine specific conflict to a particular locality. Jackie⁵⁵ notes that in the wake of inadequate rapid response capabilities by U.N in meeting the challenge of rapid response to African crises, there is need for a layered response approach to conflict in Africa.

Ghali⁵⁶ views early warning as a precursor to the identification of threats to international peace and security. Subsequently, any assessment to determine the seriousness of threats to peace should hinge on a synthesis between broad-based risk information and political indicators. Broding⁵⁷

⁵² T R Gurr, "Early Warning Systems, From Surveillance to Assessment to Action" in Cahill K.M (ed.), Preventive Diplomacy: Stopping Wars Before They Start, (New York, Routledge, 2000) pp. 243-250

⁵³ S M Lund, "Early Warning and Preventive Diplomacy" in Crocker C.A. et al (eds.), Managing Global Chaos: Sources of and Responses to International Conflict, (Washington D C., United States Institute of Peace Press, 1996) pp. 384-394

⁵⁴ S A Salim, "Localizing Outbreaks" in Cahill K.M (ed.) Preventive Diplomacy: Stopping Wars Before They Start, op cit p264

⁵⁵ C Jackie, "Improving African and International Capabilities for Preventing and Resolving Violent Conflict: The Great Lakes Region Crisis, 2nd International Berlin workshop 3-5, July 1997, Stiftung Wissenschaft and politik.

⁵⁶ B B Ghali, An Agenda for Peace: Preventive Diplomacy, Peacemaking and Peacekeeping, (New York, United Nations, 1992) PP 14-16

⁵⁷ G Broding, "Cultural and Environmental Factors in Violent Conflict: A Framework for Conflict" in Grandvoinnet H and Schneider H (eds), Conflict Management in Africa: A Permanent Challenge, op cit pp. 39-41

contends that most early warning systems tend to focus on incidences of violent conflicts as data material and hence they do not really serve as conflict prevention instruments. Accordingly, he gives prominence to demilitarisation as instrument for de-escalation of innumerable conflicts. Rocard⁵⁸ argues that for effective crisis-prevention, early warnings should include clear and detailed recommendations suggesting modes of intervention, as humanitarian intervention in a conflict only helps to manage crises and plays no part in prevention.

Theoretically and conceptually, conflict early warning has emerged in recent times as a distinct field within conflict prevention.⁵⁹ This fluidity of the field has generated diverse theoretical views about the relationship between early warning and responses to conflict. This has led to the development of different models to inform early warning and conflict prevention. Reychler⁶⁰, for example, categorizes early warning anticipation methods into four. The "the signal model" uses either premonitory or predictive signs for its early warning. The "scenario model", encompasses the probability of various future development of conflict in its analysis. While the "value added model" perceives violence to be a consequence of the presence or absence of a series of objectives and subjective circumstances, the "failed intervention model" examines what ought to have been done and when to avoid escalations or to favour a scaling-down in conflict.⁶¹

Although most prognostic approaches concentrate on anticipating outbreak of violent conflicts, they however, pay little attention to the proper

⁵⁸ M Rocard, "Towards Better Prevention", The Courier, No 168 March-April 1998 p 68-69

⁵⁹ C Mwaura, Local Conflict Prevention Initiatives and Regional Frameworks: Prospects for Integration in Africa, A paper Presented at the "All Africa Conference on African Principles of Conflict Resolution and Reconciliation, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia 8-12, November 1999.

⁶⁰ L Reychler, "Conflicts in Africa: The Issues of Control and Prevention" in Medicins Sans Frontiers, Conflict in Africa: An Analysis of Crisis and Crisis Prevention Measures, (Brussels, King Boudouin Foundation, 1997) p29

⁶¹ *Ibid.* p 29

circumstances in effecting constructive intervention. Consequently, violent conflicts are only but a history of “missed opportunities”.⁶² There is need for a more efficient prognosis of opportunity, if intervention is to play an important role in the prevention of conflicts.

On one hand, Leatherman⁶³ devises five models for detecting conflict early warning and consequently early intervention. One of these models is the “correlation model”. It tries to establish relations between violent outcomes and their structural causes such as arms proliferation or economic conditions. It further specifies international and national factors associated with interstate war. This model presumes that given appropriate methods and a reliable database, anticipation of violent conflicts and their escalation can be realistically prevented. This model is limited in the sense that generative connection between the background structures and observed consequences more often produces dynamic and causal explanation.⁶⁴

To this extent, sequential, responses and conjectural models are better suited in regard to the dynamics of conflict. This is especially so in tracking the development of conflict over time and in identifying appropriate points in the conflict cycles where intervention can make a positive difference on the outcomes. Sequential models outline the likely course of developments that lead to conflict escalation. This model focuses on background and intervening conditions and accelerators including international, internal and intervening conditions and others to conflict cycles.⁶⁵

⁶² Ibid. p 29

⁶³ J Leatherman, et al, Breaking Cycles of Violence: Conflict Prevention in Intra-State Crises, (Connecticut, Kumarian Press, 1999) p 27

⁶⁴ Ibid. p 29

⁶⁵ Ibid. p 29

Response models on their part are concerned with identifying the points in the conflict processes in which strategic interventions or "responses" are likely to make a difference in outcomes. On the other hand, intervention models distinguish between structural intervention focusing on material environment and economic conditions fostering violence and policy interventions intended to change the course of conflict dynamics. These three models: sequential, responses and intervention have been noted for their relevance in the nature and timing of warning i.e. intervention as well as it's reception as being primary while concern for quality of early warning as secondary.

The final model is the conjectural model. This model help in the interpretation of how different combinations of condition [conjectures] lead to widespread protracted conflicts or alternatively, accommodation and various types of constructive outcomes. This model hinges on Vasquez's⁶⁶ theory of war that stresses the conflict dynamics preceding the outbreak of a war and the multiplicity of its causes and context including domestic prerequisites and territorial relationship and routes to it.

In the same vein, Bennett⁶⁷ propounds the model of prevention, which encompasses an intervention in the growing conflict before the outbreak of mass violence. This model treats conflict as a particular event with a finite life cycle. Therefore, this model is applicable to conflicts set off by unique historical events. Most conflicts, however, are chronic rather than acute. While continuous observation for early warning signs of new conflicts and attempt to prevent

⁶⁶ For a detailed analysis see A J Vasquez, The War Puzzle. (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1993) p 124

⁶⁷ R R Bennett and P.C Susanne, "Introduction: Experiences in Prevention" in Rubin B.R, Cases and Strategies for Preventive Action, (New York, The Century Foundation Press, 1998) p 13

outbreaks of violence before they occur, there is need for integrating those tools and existing knowledge into the pursuit of all other policy goals.

Ultimately, any single and supposedly objective model cannot describe the early warning and response process. On the contrary, various cognitive and organizational models of politics should inform the development of early warning mechanisms. To this effect, the process from early warning to conflict transformation calls for different types of intervention along the way. Accordingly, Leon⁶⁸ advances a plea for constructive intervention. Constructive intervention aims not only at reducing the duration of conflict but also the mismatch between conflict escalation and intervention.

Literature on Conflict in the Horn of Africa

Selessie⁶⁹ argues that conflict in the Horn of Africa is rooted in its history and geography. He notes that at the heart and centre of these regional conflicts has been the continuing historical reality of the Ethiopian Empire. It has been that the decision to federate Eritrea to Ethiopia was based on the grounds of fostering stability in the region by meeting the legitimate interest of Ethiopia while the people of Eritrea the power to manage their own local affairs and safeguard their institutions and culture.⁷⁰

Nyong'o⁷¹ on the other hand traces Ethiopian-Eritrea conflict to the rivalry between Italians and British over control of River Nile until 1941. Subsequent annexation of Eritrea by Ethiopia in 1962 sowed the seeds of the

⁶⁸ G Leon, "Early Warning: Conceptual and Practical Issues" in Rupesinghe K and Kuroda M (eds.), Early Warning and Conflict Resolution, (London, Macmillan Press Ltd., 1992) p xv

⁶⁹ H.B Selessie, "The American Dilemma on The Horn" in Bender G.J et al, African Crisis Areas and U.S. Foreign Policy, (Los Angeles, University of California Press, 1983) p 165

⁷⁰ United Nations, The United Nations and the Independence of Eritrea, The United Nations Bluebooks Series Vol. xii, (Department of Public Information, New York) p 4

present conflict. Mwagiru⁷² asserts that multiple borders in the Horn of Africa have delimited the conflict system. This in turn has generated multiple conflicts, which needs common strategies in their management.

Cheluget⁷³ observes that IGAD unlike East African Community [EAC] has a daunting task in intervening in conflicts in the Horn of Africa. Member states have differences in colonial experiences and cultural backgrounds such as the divide of Ethiopia/Eritrea, Somalia's British and Italian colonial past, and Sudan's North and South rift. Wolfgoing⁷⁴ argues that although the border issue was the event that triggered armed conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea in 1998, there is little reason to believe it was the root cause.

Critical Review of Literature

The literature generally dwells on the causes of conflict, ideal elements of early warning and the existing conflict system in the Horn of Africa. Further, the literature review reveals the need for both theoretical and practical efforts in identifying various causes/signs of conflict in advance and attempt to situate the right conflict preventive strategies. The literature pegs early warning on conflict cycle without necessarily differentiating between early and late warning. This study will only dwell on both structural and dynamic causes of conflict that necessitates early warning and early response. Further, the literature exclusively treats conflict and early warning system without necessarily applying to a particular conflict situation. Embracing early warning system as an integral aspect

⁷¹ A.P Nyong'o, "The Implications of Crises and Conflict in The Upper Nile Valley" in Deng M.F and Zartman W.I, [eds.], conflict Resolution in Africa, op cit. p 96.

⁷² See M Mwagiru et al, Borders, Frontiers and Conflict in Africa, Working Papers on Conflict Management No. 3 (2001), Nairobi, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung and Centre for Conflict Research, 2001 p 3

⁷³ K Cheluget, EAC Lessons for Peace and Conflict Resolution in the Horn of Africa, A Paper Presented to the Regional Conference on Sustainable Peace and Human Security in the Horn of Africa: Issues and Challenges, Mombasa, Kenya 30th october-1st Nov. 2001

of conflict prevention and management has some practical relevancy. Therefore, this study seeks to contribute knowledge in interstate conflict early warning and fill the void at the sub-regional level using Ethiopia-Eritrea conflict as a case study.

Conceptual Framework

Theory provides lenses to view and compartmentalize some phenomena for the purpose of analysis.⁷⁵ This amounts to systematizing facts for the explanation of the world under study. Similarly, Burton and Dukes⁷⁶ observe that a theory concretises one's thinking and helps in imposing meaning to facts for clear understanding. Accordingly, there are a number of theoretical and conceptual arguments informing early warning and conflict prevention.

The underlying assumption of this study is that effective conflict early warning and prevention is only possible if it is based on dynamic causes and development of conflicts. The effectiveness of managing peace and preventing conflict requires good understanding of the conflict dynamics. Firstly, the techniques of preventing conflict mainly targets efforts towards attitudes and behaviour with the aim of building up a structure of values and beliefs that militates against the use of disruptive behaviour and secondly, ensures that behaviour occurs within a recognized framework of accepted rules.⁷⁷ The application of early warning to a conflict cycle emphasizes not only management of peace but also prevention of conflict. Focusing on gradual developments of potential conflicts enhances identification of either early warning signals of an

⁷⁴ H Wolfgoing, "End of the African Renaissance?", New Routes op cit. P 28

⁷⁵ See B Russet and Starr, H, World politics: The Menu for Choice, 3rd ed. (New York, W.H. Freeman and Company, 1989). pp33-34

⁷⁶ J Burton and F Dukes [eds.], Conflict Reading in Management and Conflict Resolution, (London, Macmillan, 1990) p 71

⁷⁷ C R Mitchell, The Structure of International Conflicts, op cit. p 277

impending conflict or signals of hope that offer opportunity for strengthening peace efforts.⁷⁶

Different factors informing conflict early warning are emphasized at different stages of conflict. At the structural tensions stage, there is need to track the background or structural conditions that constitute root causes of conflict. At the level of conflict escalation, concern is focused on dynamic factors or accelerators, which may exacerbate the underlying conditions driving up tensions. While at the level of humanitarian crisis, concern is on the trigger incidents that act to spark and ignite both structural factors and accelerators.⁷⁹ An early warning and early response system relies on both structural risk assessment to point to opportunities for appropriate and well-planned preventive action. The early warning system endeavours to address both structural and dynamic factors that are likely to cause violent conflict. This provides a means for identifying the key factors for effective prevention. In structural conflict, agents and structures interact and affect each other as mutually constituted entities. Therefore, interaction of early warning systems and parties to a conflict influence the way the conflict develops, including changes in the goals, demands and behaviours and perception of the issues at stake. Early warning is an evaluative process leading to political judgment about whether or not to take action and how to take proactive action.

Consequently, the relationship between early warning and conflict prevention is pertinent to this study. Early warning discloses the imminent escalation of conflicts to violent means and signals for preventive actions, mostly

⁷⁸ See Schmeidl s, Practical Challenges in Predicting Wars: FAST: An Example of A Comprehensive Early Warning Methodology (A Paper Prepared for the PRIO/Uppsala University/DECRG High Level Scientific Conference, Uppsala, Sweden 8-9 June 2001)

⁷⁹ See Davies J, Conflict Early Warning and Early Response for Sub-Saharan Africa, Summary of Working Draft Sept 2000. A Paper Prepared for USAID TULANE Cert. project.

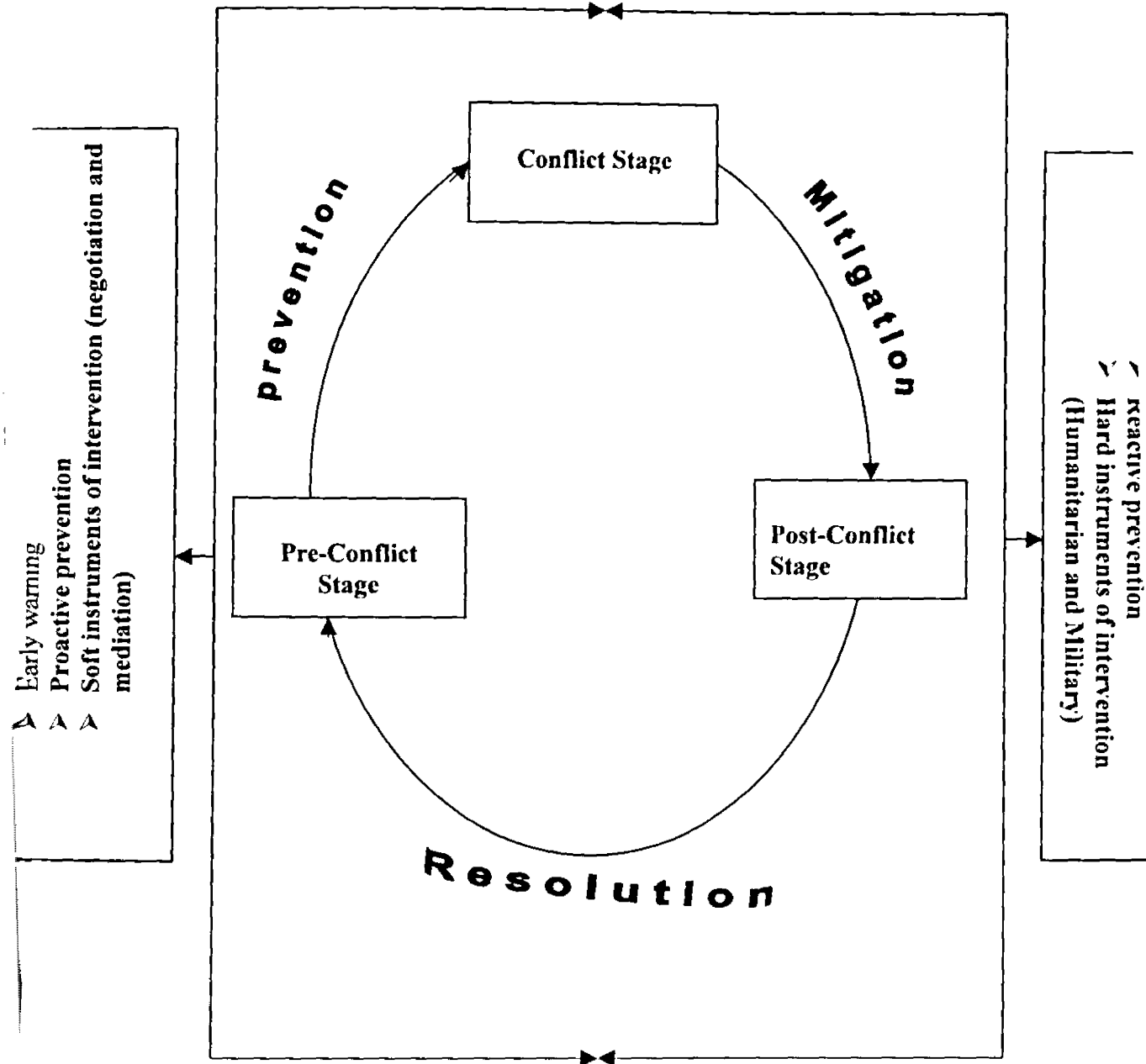
involving non-coercive and non-military preventive measures. More specific, continuous monitoring and reporting on the sources and dynamics of conflict is imperative for policy makers to interpret information and develop effective conflict prevention strategies. Prevention of conflict at one stage serves as early warning for another stage. Early warning is a continuous process that transcends all stages of conflict.

The underlying assumption is that conflict prevention starts at identifying and monitoring potential conflict before the outbreak of violence or related forms of humanitarian crisis. Early warning information generated is then used for informed decision-making. The analysis draws out the implications of early warning information into future scenarios and identifies a range of early response options that are appropriate to the situation and with operational and policy constraints of potential interveners. Therefore, the effectiveness of early warning, as a tool of conflict prevention and management depends on resources, interest and commitment by potential interveners.

Conflict stages differentiate and determine the events and forms of intervention. These dynamics of conflict, therefore, dictate the application of early warning system on conflict cycle by differentiating risk assessment, conflict early warning and humanitarian early warning system where many interveners have a consistent place of response. In this regard, collective intervention can assume different forms and degrees.⁸⁰

⁸⁰ This view is advanced by H Tesfaye, "The Challenge of Safeguarding Peace in Africa: A View Point" in Boii H, Networking with a View to Promoting Peace: Towards Sustainable Peace-Civil Society Dialogue Forum for the Horn of Africa, (Nairobi 10-13 December, 2000 second conference, Stiftung, 2001) p 128

Conceptual Framework of Early Warning



This conceptual framework illustrates the relationship between the levels of conflict, the outbreak of violence and the application of measures that seek to prevent, mitigate, or resolve conflict. The mechanisms and related tasks employed at various stages of conflict seek to deter the cyclical

progression of conflict. The relationship between prevention, mitigation and resolution on the triad cycle of conflict forms the conflict early warning framework.

Preventive choices over which means are best employed are determined by phases of a conflict. An intervention is either made to influence a conflict towards a desired situation or to avoid an undesired situation. The anticipation of a conflict involves two processes, one in which a response is made to the signal that indicates a conflict situation is building up and another one that retraces steps back to the causes of the conflict. Consequently, any preventive strategy is dependent on two elements: the willingness to take action and the possibilities of taking action. The willingness is influenced by determination of actors to act in a preventive manner before conflict degenerates into violence. The possibilities for taking action, however, display the opposite tendency. The earlier the alarm is sounded, the more alternatives remain open and the more the means that can be employed.

Debates over whether there exist early warning or not in specific cases of conflict results from different demands for standards of early warning. Some accept a vague sense of future possibility of conflict while others demand a precise prediction that includes the scale, nature, timing and location of the violence. Some feel that indicators of violence themselves constitute early warning, while others seek explicit statements about the cumulative effect of all the factors contributing to the violence. These debates notwithstanding, there are different types of conflict early warning and each type requires a different approach as argued later in Chapter Three.

The basic assumption underlying the present theory of early warning as Galtung ⁶¹ asserts is that violence breed violence. Since early warning of violence is based on structural factors, then the obvious preventive therapy demands change of those conditions. The intensity of intervention should be proportional to the level of conflict. However, change of conflict dynamics depends on adequate and reliable knowledge of the causes of a conflict.⁶²

Definition of Terms

This section defines some of the principal terms that are pertinent to the understanding of this study. These terms include: conflict prevention, preventive diplomacy and early warning:

Conflict prevention: The term refers to any policies, procedures and institutions that exist or actions taken to avert the eruption, escalation or resurgence of violence.

Early warning: In this study Early Warning [EW] refers to "the systematic collection and analysis of information coming from areas of crises for the purpose of: anticipating the escalation of violent conflict, development of strategic responses to these crises, and the presentation of options to critical actors for decision-making and preventive action".⁶³

Preventive Diplomacy: According to the United Nations, preventive diplomacy is the action to prevent disputes from arising between parties, or existing disputes from escalating into conflicts and limits the spread of the latter when they occur.⁶⁴

⁶¹ Galtung Johan, "Early Warning: An Early Warning to the Early Warners", accessed at www.sad.ch/em/pub/n1/001/index.html

⁶² Vayrynen, Riimo, "Preventing Deadly Conflicts: Failures in Iraq, Yugoslavia and Kosova", Columbia International Affairs online 2/99 accessed at www.ciaonet.org/contrib.html

⁶³ Refer to the Abridged Thesaurus and Glossary of Early and Conflict Prevention Terms Prepared for FEWER by the P100M Foundations.

⁶⁴ B B Ghali, An Agenda for Peace, op cit pp. 11-12.

Hypotheses

- (i). Early warning and response on the key conflict generating factors prevents and mitigates violent conflict.
- (ii). Advance information does not elicit public pressure internationally or otherwise to successfully stem conflict.
- (iii). Appropriate response depends on the correct interpretation of early signs of a conflict.

Methodology.

The study is theoretical based on secondary information. The study examines the mainstream literature on conflict early warning and preventive strategies. This research will be based on review of collected information from documented sources. The information collected will be subjected to a critical analysis and evaluation. The analytical approach seeks to integrate early warning to early response.

A key issue in connecting early warning and early response is the extent to which conflict warning indicators between Ethiopia-Eritrea conflict and how these indicators would have elicited responses. In order to test the three hypotheses, the study adopts a two-step methodology: First step involves a historical review of conflict and then a critical analysis of the events that led to the conflict, second step involves linking early warning and early response decision-making process. The study adopts a historical approach, as this approach systematically and objectively locates, evaluates and synthesizes evidence in order to establish facts and draw conclusions about past events.⁸⁶ The analysis of Ethiopia-Eritrea conflict is focused on the period between 1996 and 2000.

⁸⁶ See Cohen L and Manion L, Research Methods in Education, 4th edition, (London, Routledge, 1994) p 45

This is because much of what happened since 1996 reflects all or some of the interactions that led to the war. By focusing on the key events of that period we hope to make some observations on the development of conflict and perhaps identify some instances that led to escalation of violence rather than prevention of the conflict. The discussion on the process leading to each state taking decision to go to war will be beyond the scope of the present study.

The data to be generated for this study will mainly focus on early warning and early response processes. The analysis of the information will be generated through critical review of secondary information focusing on the extent of how early warning and early response would have impacted on Ethiopia-Eritrea conflict. Review of both unpublished and published literature relevant to this study will include but not limited to books, journals, monographs, articles, periodicals, United Nations' Reports, European Union's Reports, Organization of African Unity Reports, Intergovernmental Authority on Development Reports, Magazines, Bulletins and Internet resources.

Tentative Chapter Outline

The study is organized around six chapters. The present Chapter has stated the research problem, aims and justification for the study, outlined the hypotheses to be tested, laid the conceptual framework to guide the study, discussed methodological milieu within which research is conducted, defined pertinent terms, and reviewed relevant literature within which to situate the study. Chapter Two will delve into Ethiopia-Eritrea conflict as a case study. The Chapter will examine the historical perspective of the conflict, the formative co-operation between Ethiopia and Eritrea, trace early warning indicators of the conflict and

explore the international community's response to the conflict with a view of explicating whether the response was reactive or proactive.

Chapter Three will undertake a study on the theoretical consideration of conflict early warning system. This Chapter will examine theoretical discourses on the early warning models, types of early warning system and appraise conflict early warning systems. Chapter Four explores the legal basis and structures of IGAD early warning mechanism in regard to information collection, analysis, decision-making and response. Finally, Chapter Four will attempt to assess the mechanism in the prevention and management of conflict in the IGAD sub-region.

A critical assessment will form Chapter Five of this study. This Chapter will be concerned with the observation made and link issues raised in the study. It will further analyse the hypotheses stated in study. The last Chapter will tie up the loose ends by way of summary and conclusion. The Chapter will highlight issues in the preceding chapters i.e. theoretical framework and achievement or failure of the objectives. It will pinpoint out the gaps in the study, and suggest areas where future studies should be undertaken.

CHAPTER TWO

ETHIOPIA – ERITREA CONFLICT: AN OVERVIEW

Introduction

The Ethiopia-Eritrea war began in 1998 and ended in 2000 after both states signed a peace agreement in Algiers, Algeria.¹ Some observers point to the economic factors as having been the immediate cause of disagreements over the Badame, a frontier between Ethiopia and Eritrea.² Although these observations seem to explain the immediate causes of the conflict between these two States, generally, the Horn of Africa is informed by diverse and interconnected causes of conflicts. These range from individual or group impulse to structural inequality and injustice. This chapter argues that the origin of conflict between Eritrea and Ethiopia is rooted in the colonial period. The continued rivalry over territorial control in post-colonial era manifested differently during the Cold War between the former USSR and the USA. The fight between the two super-powers aimed at winning allies to fight each other rather than physical control of territories.

This chapter further argues that, despite the acrimony between Eritrea and Ethiopia after 1962, the two liberation fronts: Tigrayan Peoples Liberation Front and Eritrea Peoples Liberation Front had opportunity to rally behind a common cause of ousting the Derg regime. Although TPLF mainly sought to ouster the regime of Mengistu Haile Mariam, EPLF looked beyond ousting Mengistu Haile Mariam and sought for independence. This alliance saw the

¹ See M Plaut, "Towards Cold Peace: The Outcome of the Ethiopia-Eritrea War of 1998-2000", Review of African Political Economy, Vol. 28 No 87 March 2001, pp125-129: 125

² See G G Sandie, "Brothers at War? Reflections on an Internecine Conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea", Africa Journal of Conflict Resolution No1/2001 at www.Accord.org.za/publications/journals.

ouster of Mengistu Haile Mariam in 1991 and subsequently Eritrea became an independent state in 1993. Thereafter, the alliance was maintained albeit translated into a loose unstructured co-operation between Eritrea and Ethiopia. The outbreak and escalation of border conflict can be explained in the context of Eritrea's struggle for independence and the resulting co-operation between the TPLF led government of Ethiopia and EPLF led government of Eritrea.³ The war was conducted in total disregard of international safeguards of States' territorial integrity. This is reflected in the loss of human lives estimated in the range of 50,000 – 80,000 people⁴, a magnitude that surpassed that of Kosovo.

Attempt is made in this chapter to answer questions on the causes and escalation of conflict, and whether there existed early warning signs. This chapter gives an overview of the conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea, first by placing the conflict in its historical perspective. Second, it elucidates on the relationship between TPLF and EPLF that led to the ouster of Mengistu and eventual independence of Eritrea. Thirdly, the chapter examines the unstructured co-operation between Eritrea and Ethiopia and finally, to pinpoint what might have been the early warning signs of this conflict.

Historical Perspective Of The Conflict

The colonial and post-colonial legacies and unwillingness to reach political consensus over pertinent issues continue to affect bilateral relations of two states.⁵ Although Nyong'o⁶ agrees on the colonial link of most African

³ C Clapham, "The Eritrea-Ethiopia Conflict" FMR2 August 1998, Accessed at www.clp/conflict, p1

⁴ Negash T and Tronvoll k, Brothers at War: Making Sense of the Eritrean-Ethiopian War, (Oxford, James Currey Ltd., 2000), p.89

conflicts, he nevertheless observes that the current conflicts in the Horn of Africa are a reflection of the political economy of the area. Eritrea existed separately as a colonial territory of Italy between 1890-1941. However, it was federated to Ethiopia in 1952 based on UN Resolution 390 V of 1950.⁷ The decision to federate Eritrea to Ethiopia did not reflect the wishes of the Eritreans. Consequently, this led to the formation of liberation fronts to fight for Eritrea's independence. The Eritrean Liberation Front was the first one to be formed with its headquarters in Cairo in 1961. In November 1961, Emperor Haile Selassie abolished the federation and decreed a complete union after sensing the external support the rebellious groups were receiving. This action intensified regional campaigns against the Haile Selassie's regime. Meanwhile, a split in ELF in 1969-1970 led to the establishment of the Eritrea Peoples Liberation Front in 1970 comprising of majority Tigrinya speaking Christians with a strong leaning on Marxism.

The Italian invasion of Ethiopia in 1935 led to establishment of the Italian East African Empire comprising of Eritrea, Ethiopia, and Italian Somaliland. This invasion led to the adjustment of boundaries of Eritrea to include the province of Tigre and other adjacent areas.⁸ The main reason was to unify Tigrinya speaking peoples and related ethnic groups of northern Ethiopia and Eritrea. The liberation of three countries in 1941 enabled Eritrea to return to its pre-war frontiers. Subsequently, it was placed under British military occupation between 1941-1952. Eritrea's colonial experience with

⁵ See O Muga "Peace in The North: Ethiopians have Nothing to Loose", Kenya Times, 3rd/Dec/1989, p. 6

⁶ Nyong'o PA "The Implications of Crises and Conflicts in The Upper Nile Valley" in Deng FM and Zartman IW [eds.], Conflict Resolution in Africa (Washington DC, The Brookings Institution 1991), pp95-114: 96

⁷ J.E. Dougherty, The Horn of Africa: A Map of Political-Strategic Conflict, (Cambridge, Institute for Foreign Policy Analysis Inc, Special Report April, 1982), p14

Italy, Britain and Ethiopia laid its territorial boundary as espoused in various treaties of 1900, 1902 and 1908.

However, the most crucial aspect of the conflict continues to centre on the accessibility of Ethiopia to the sea through the coastal town of Massawa, the Port of Assaba and Djibouti.⁹ An independent Eritrea continues to pose a serious threat to a land locked Ethiopia, even if Ethiopia establishes close neighbourly relations with the new state. In the same vein, it has been argued that armed conflict between Eritrea and Ethiopia is situated in the contentious and interconnected factors hinging on: justice, equality, challenges of identity, governance, competition over scarce resources, and sustainable development.¹⁰ The long experience of violence and history of war has continued to reinforce fierce territorial nationalism in Eritrea. This perception of being an occupied country and a society at war has not shifted to an independent state at peace. This is evidenced in the Eritrea's consideration of conflict as a necessary tool for demarcating religious, ethnic, political and territorial borders/ boundaries with its neighbours.¹¹ This has been necessitated by the perception to unify parts of Eritrean territory and reinforce Eritrean identity.

⁸ C Legum and B.Lee, Conflict in The Horn of Africa (New York, Africana Publishing Company, 1977), p 21.

⁹ Ibid. p 25

¹⁰ Lyons T, "The International Context of Internal War: Ethiopia/Eritrea" in Keller EJ and Rothchild D (eds.), Africa in the New International Order, (Boulder, Colorado, Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1996) pp 85-99:85.

¹¹ For a detailed discussion see T Kjetil, "Borders of Violence-Boundaries of Identity: Demarcating the Eritrean Nation-State", Ethnic and Racial Studies, Nov 99, Vol 22 Issue 6. See also M Fouad, "Nationalism, State Formation and the Public Sphere: Eritrea 1991-1996", Review of African Political Economy, Dec 96, Vol. 23 Issue 70. See also Christopher Clapham, "Ethiopia and Eritrea: Insecurity and Intervention in the Horn" in Oliver Furlly and Roy May (eds), African Interventionist States, (England, Ashgate Publishing Ltd, 2001) p 130

According to lyob¹², the Ethiopia- Eritrea conflict is informed by inter-related phenomena. One of these is the clash of interests resulting from asymmetrical vision espoused by Eritrea and Ethiopia. Another one is the failure to legalize "understandings" between the two states into formal treaties based on international law. Further, two related sets of events and circumstances tend to explain the root cause of the conflict. First, the evolution of partnership from 1975-1998 and the self-destructive premises on which it rested. Finally, the contradictory roles played by Eritrea as diasporic state and Ethiopia as a regional hegemony.¹³

The hegemonic tendency of Ethiopia has been delineated in the modern monarchy (1894-1974) to Mengistu's regime (1974-1991) and currently in the new leadership of Meles Zenawi. Since 1991, this vision of dominance can be traced earlier to the Amharic-speaking peoples of Ethiopia and today in the Tigray, the dominant ethnic element in Meles EPRDF regime.¹⁴ Historically, governments in diaspora have emerged after protracted periods of protests with privileged groups exercising hegemony. Consequently, Eritrea's liberal attitude towards the real sharing of sovereignty with Ethiopia in border areas defined the norm of diasporic state, which eventually led to conflict. In this regard, the Eritrea-Ethiopian war can be taken to be a continuation of the internal policies of the region during the late 20th century. This points to the fact that each state opted for war not to defend the territorial integrity of their respective borders but to reconfigure the territorial boundaries.¹⁵ Young¹⁶ agrees with lyob's view by observing that Ethiopia was,

¹² This kind of argument is espoused by R. lyob in the Article "The Ethiopia-Eritrea Conflict: Diasporic Vs Hegemonic States in The Horn of Africa", Journal of Modern African Studies Vol. 38, No 4, 2000, (659-682), p 659

¹³ Ibid p 660

¹⁴ Ibid pp 660-661

and continues to jostle for hegemonic role in the entire Horn of Africa. Similarly, it is observed that the main cause of many conflicts in Africa resides in a status quo, which gives primacy to territorial integrity over the right of people to self-determination. This has been best exemplified in the past by Ethiopia when it capitalized on its recognition as a sovereign state and its role as a victim / opponent of Italian fascism to secure international support for its territorial expansion through seeking in 1950 a UN Resolution to federate Eritrea to Ethiopia in 1952.

Ethiopia continued to empower itself by making key strategic alliances, first, with the USA between 1953-1973 and later with the Soviet between 1978-1990. Ethiopia ensured that it had reliable sources of military hardware and training. This superpower support enhanced its status as a regional hegemony in the Horn. To counter each of the capabilities essential to Ethiopia's maintenance of regional hegemony, EPLF led government-enunciated policies of self-reliance.¹⁷ Although Ethiopia's hegemony has subsided as compared in 1970's, its residual aura continues to rear its head on a number of crises in the Horn. The continued relations between Eritrea and Ethiopia essentially hinges on their economic and historical relations. Both states share complementary economic basis where Eritrea and Ethiopia need each other in regard to economic market, human and economic resources.¹⁸

¹⁵ Negash T and Tronvoll k, Brothers at War: Making Sense of the Eritrean-Ethiopian War, op cit. p 100

¹⁶ Young C "Self-determination, Territorial Integrity and The African State System" in Deng FM and Zartman I.W (eds.), Conflict Resolution in Africa, (Washington DC, The Brookings Institution, 1991), (320-346), p 332

¹⁷ See R. lyob, "Regional Hegemony: Domination and Resistance in the Horn of Africa", The Journal of Modern African States Vol. 31, No2, 1993, (257-276), pp 271-272

¹⁸ T Negash and K Tronvoll, Brothers at War: Making Senses of Eritrean-Ethiopian War, op cit p 100

The Liberation Struggle (1975-1991)

The origin of ideological and political contention between Eritrea and Ethiopia is embedded in the relationship between two liberation fronts, EPLF and TPLF. In the formative period, TPLF leaned heavily on the experienced EPLF and ELF Fronts for political and military advice. This interaction evolved into a reciprocal relationship between the TPLF and EPLF. The TPLF received military skills and arms in return for substantial and vital military supports to EPLF base areas against Derg attacks.¹⁹ The EPLF support for the TPLF was conditioned on assurance of Eritrea's independence from Ethiopia. However, the surmounting pressures from other fronts let both EPLF and TPLF shift their dual support to other rival fronts, EPLF supported EPRP while TPLF supported ELF. The period between 1975 and 1976 witnessed overlapping and contradictory alliances between rival fronts in both Tigray and Eritrea. There was no well-prepared and mutually accepted strategy of joint EPLF/TPLF struggle for liberation.

These differences were extended to political and ideological spheres. The TPLF based their revolutionary interpretations in the Marxist- Leninist framework. To this end, Ethiopia's economic, social and political problems were seen to be a reflection of the dominance of Amhara ruling elites over other nationalities. These conditions formed the platform on which Tigray demanded for its independence.²⁰ In contrast, the EPLF justified their struggle for independence on historical and political legitimacy. They prevailed upon TPLF to fight for a democratic Ethiopia instead of balkanising Ethiopia into independent nationalities.

¹⁹ Ibid p 18

²⁰ Ibid p 15, see also Lionel C, "Regional Dimensions of Conflict in The Horn of Africa", Third World Quarterly, Feb 99, Vol 20 Issue 1

Militarily, EPLF believed in conventional warfare. This led to the development of a military strategy in 1977. This strategy emphasized on the establishment and defence of a secured area, waging war in contested areas and relying on guerrilla warfare in Derg controlled territory.²¹ According to TPLF, this type of warfare alienated the liberation movement from the masses of which they were supposed to liberate. Furthermore, the relationship between TPLF and EPLF deteriorated in 1983 after TPLF mooted for a political and military union of all opponents of the Ethiopian regime.²² The timing and public disclosure of the proposal did not augur well for EPLF. This differences in perception of ideology, politics and military strategy led to a lull in relations between two fronts between 1985-1988.

Subsequent co-operation between TPLF and EPLF did not reflect the earlier intimate alliance. However, harmonization of both fronts' struggle views and aims in 1988 smoothened the relations.²³ The differences between Ethiopia and Eritrea were not considered alongside the liberation struggle to oust the Ethiopian government. The simmering differences over the exact location of Eritrea's borders exploded as early as 1976 despite border delimitation in 1900, 1902 and 1908.

According to TPLF, ELF extended its administrative authorities to the Badame, which was in the Ethiopian side. At this time, no diplomatic effort was made to resolve the dispute apart from military solution by TPLF and EPLF, which temporarily rested the matter. In 1984, the border issue surfaced again and an agreement between TPLF and EPLF acknowledged the possibility of disputed area along the borders. Both Fronts pledged for

²¹ Ibid p 17

²² M Wubneh and Y Abate, Ethiopia: Transition and Development in The Horn of Africa, (Boulder, Colorado, West View Press 1988), p.32

negotiations soon after the struggle.²⁴ The 1991 principles of co-operation between Transitional Government of Ethiopia (TGE) and Provisional Government of Eritrea (PGE) did not honour the promises by two Fronts on the border issue.²⁵ Belatedly, the border issue captured the attention of the Government of Eritrea in 1997 when basic disagreements on economic relations emerged.

Similarly, the disagreement on economic matters between Eritrea and Ethiopia can be traced in the TPLF and EPLF alliance. The Tigrinya constitutes 60 per cent of most Eritreans, however, their identity and loyalty has always been with the people of Tigray. The TPLF, which is the most important member of EPRDF government, has been squeezed between Eritrea and Ethiopia borders for many years. The territorial contraction of TPLF has compelled it to create structures, which strengthen relations between Ethiopia and Eritrea and strike a balance between ethnic favouritism and the urban elite.²⁶ This has necessitated TPLF to play two incompatible roles of serving as a dominant partner of the coalition government and as the only party in power entrusted with the development of Tigray as a region. To develop Tigray, the exports from Eritrea to Ethiopia had to be controlled or curtailed because Tigray was capable of producing goods, which Ethiopia was importing from Eritrea. The ensuing competition between Eritrea and Tigray over access to the Ethiopian market formed a running strand that eventually led to the war in 1998. This is aptly captured in the following argument; "Eritrea has no enemy among other regions and peoples of

²³ See J Young, "The Tigray and Eritrea Liberation Fronts: A History of Tensions and Pragmatism", *Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol. 34 No 1, 1996 (pp105-120), p 117

²⁴ T Negash and k Tronvoll, Brothers at War: Making Sense of the Eritrean-Ethiopian War, op cit. p 26

²⁵ Ibid p 26

²⁶ Ibid p 95

Ethiopia, but only in the ranks of the TPLF clique".²⁷ The political destiny of the region after 1991 continues to be informed by the nature of relations between the two movements. The present policies of these two countries continue to be reinforced by the ideological differences of their revolutionary struggle over the past two decades. These strands of political differences formed during the struggle continue to be reflected in their current relations.²⁸

Co-operation between Eritrea and Ethiopia: 1991-1997

The relationship between EPLF and TPLF during the struggle involved many ad-hoc agreements. These agreements arose out of the historical need to oust Mengistu's regime. The anticipation of economic and political benefits necessitated the continued co-operation between the two states even after the collapse of Mengistu's regime. The adoption of the principles of co-operation by the national conference in 1991 reflects the seriousness of co-operation between TGE and PGE. The principles of co-operation stressed among other issues the independence of both Ethiopia and Eritrea, accessibility to the port of Assab by Ethiopia, and envisaged the establishment of a common defence pact.²⁹

After independence in 1993, Eritrea had to reorient its relations with Ethiopia. In doing this, it took two considerations into account, the independence of Eritrea and the mutual benefits to accrue from the co-operation.³⁰ The co-operation centred on a number of plans initiated in different fields. This included economic policy, trade, immigration laws and

²⁷ Ibid p 95

²⁸ J.Young, "The Tigray and Eritrea Liberation Fronts: A History of Tensions and Pragmatism" op cit p 120

²⁹ T. Negash and Tronvoll K, Brothers at War: Making Sense of The Eritrea-Ethiopian War, op cit. p 26

³⁰ See R Pateman, "Eritrea and Ethiopia: Strategies for Reconciliation in The Horn of Africa, Africa Today, 1991, 2nd Quarter, Vol 38 Issue 2,p 43

social integration. The co-ordination of policies at different levels was envisaged in order to enhance free trade and mutual security. Ethiopia's need to access the sea and Eritrea's need for stable commercial partner drove the early relations between the two states. The realization of this mutual need led to a series of bilateral agreements characterizing economic interdependence. Consequently, citizens from both states freely settled and invested in either state. Among the agreements were: the Friendship and Co-operation agreement, the Economic agreement that concerned with harmonization of economic policies, planning and economic development agreement.³¹

The preceding arguments suggest that independent Eritrea understood very well that comradely understandings were insufficient basis of adjusting conflicts that emerged thereafter. However, the good relations enjoyed in the alliance between the two leaders of Eritrea and Ethiopia made them oblivious of the immediate need for formal demarcation of the common border. Furthermore, Eritrea redefined its citizenship broadly without strict adherence to legal guides specifying the scope of such application. Seemingly, this laid the ground for both states to misinterpret and manipulate earlier informal accords signed between 1991 and 1993.

Early Warning Signs Of Conflict

The 1998-2000 Ethiopia-Eritrea conflict was only a culmination of the differences between the two states, which took turn in the early 1990's. One could possibly argue that there were indicators or warning signs of the

³¹ For a detailed report see From Border Dispute to Open Invasion: A Report on Ethiopia's Aggression Against Eritrea and It's Consequences, (The Community of The University of Asmara, June, 2000). p 8

conflict. Possibly the conflict would not have erupted into violence if those warnings were acted upon by then. The PGE issuance of the first proclamation of the citizenship in 1992 invested its dispersed populations with a pan-Eritrean identity. Consequently, independent Eritrea failed to establish the legal terms of reference to formally legitimate its trans-national "citizenry" and protect them under international law. Further, it failed to formalize the existing understanding of dual citizenship with Ethiopia where its largest community lived in diaspora. This failure reflects the internal politics between 1991-1993 in both Eritrea and Ethiopia where the process of redefining citizenship widened its scope. These changes posed a challenge on the existing laws regarding the bases for national identification. Eritrea based recognition of its citizenship on anyone descended, through either parent; from ancestors born within the territory of Eritrea and in the process incorporated many individuals of mixed descent between the two states. Eritrea's independence in 1993 compounded the whole problem, as Ethiopia's opposition groups demanded sympathizers of Eritrea's cause for independence to leave Ethiopia.³² These politics of resentment did not merit any seriousness until when both Ethiopia and Eritrea disguised the issue of citizenship to expel each other's citizens. Between 1991 and 1993 for instance, the EPLF government in Eritrea expelled at least 125,000 Ethiopians most of whom were Tigrean civilians, on the pretext that they related to the Ethiopian army and the former Derg regime. Likewise, Ethiopia expelled more than 67,000 Eritreans on the pretext that they were a threat to

³² Iyob R, "The Ethiopia-Eritrea Conflict: Diasporic Vs Hegemonic States in the Horn of Africa" op cit p 670

security because they had military experience or training and at the same time were economic benefactors of the Eritrean government.³³

Likewise the disagreement over border location antedates 1998 border skirmishes. As early as 1991, Eritrean residents in border areas under TPLF administration clashed with local officials who penalized them for infractions of Ethiopian law. These clashes notwithstanding, Eritrea disregarded these signs and continued to allow TPLF/EPLF forces access to Eritrean areas. The Ethiopian regime perceived these areas inhabited by the Afar to harbour ethnic groups opposed to the former regime in Ethiopia. This led to frequent clashes over border areas. In spite of these experiences, Asmara granted permission to armed TPLF in July 1997 to pursue Ethiopian rebels within its territory.³⁴ These actions provided opportunity for Ethiopian troops to secure bases and continue asserting control of some areas in Eritrea. This prompted Eritrea to protest over the occupation of Addi Murug in a letter written by president Isaias Afwerki addressed to the Prime Minister of Ethiopia Meles Zenawi. Soon after the Badame clashes, the Ethiopian parliament warned Eritrea on the inevitability of a full-scale war. This became a reality when an outright war commenced on may 12th. 1998.

Furthermore, there ensued a disagreement over the motives and validity of regional map of the Tigray region ostensibly issued for teaching in schools. This action reinforced Eritrea's demand for respect of its territorial sovereignty based on international (colonial) boundaries. Ethiopia emphasized on the administrative presence as a basis for respect of its territorial sovereignty and TPLF continued to administer border areas claimed

³³ T Negash and K Tronvoll, Brothers at War: Making Sense of The Eritrean-Ethiopian War, op cit. p 53

³⁴ Iyob R, "The Ethiopia-Eritrea Conflict: Diasporic Vs Hegemonic States in the Horn of Africa" op cit p 665

by Eritreans on this basis. On the other hand, Eritrea based its claim on colonial treaties. The EPLF units, which in the pre-independence period had maintained a strong military presence in the Ethiopian areas, pulled out after 1991. In early 1990s, the incompatibility of having areas with two systems of rule administered by both Ethiopia and Eritrea became apparent during the months immediately following independence.³⁵ This problem of reconciling territorial sovereignty and local administration lingered on until the war broke out.

There were several attempts to resolve the border dispute. In august 1997, both the president of Eritrea and the Prime Minister of Ethiopia exchanged letters pertaining to the border dispute in Addi Murug and Badame. The president of Eritrea expressed the existence of obvious knowledge on the boundary while the prime minister of Ethiopia was of the opinion of setting up of preparation committee leading to border demarcation.³⁶ A consensus emerged to resolve border disputes through bilateral negotiations. This resulted in the creation of a joint border commission, whose main terms of reference were to resolve the dispute, failure of which the two states expressed intent to involve third party in arbitration and demarcation of the boundary. However, this effort did not deter both states from manoeuvring borders. In October 1997, the Ethiopian mapping authority issued a new map of the region of Addi Murug .The map showed the demarcated areas of Badame plain, Alitena and areas south of Tsarona as part of Tigray.

³⁵ Ibid p 673

³⁶ See Appendix 3 dealing with extracts of letters exchanged between President of Eritrea and Prime Minister of Ethiopia in T Negash and K Tronvoll, Brothers at War: Making Sense of The Eritrean-Ethiopian War, op cit. pp 115-116

The existence of popular economic belief to the effect that independent state of Eritrea was strengthening itself on Ethiopia's economic resources did no good to the otherwise deteriorating relations. Evidently, the structural asymmetries of what amounted to undefined dual powers of territorial control in border areas between the two states appeared in real world economic clashes. The two states separate paths of economic development led to further misunderstandings. Eritrea narrowly assumed its request for Nakfa-Birr currency parity was undeniable due to its past support of TPLF.³⁷ Ethiopia rejected the request and instead reacted by limiting petty border trade on 2,000 Nakfa, and any future transaction based on the use of letters of credit. All these actions put Eritrea off balance and forced it to introduce Nakfa as the official currency.

In retaliation, FDRE launched new Birr notes, which showed a map of post-1991 Ethiopia minus Eritrea. The issuance of a new regional map for Tigray, which incorporated the disputed areas of Eritrea into Ethiopia, contradicted the earlier map. Ethiopia's action to redraw its internal borders based on ethnic identity, establishing Tigray as an autonomous state within a state among a coalition of similar ethnic mini-states complicated border matters. The new map complicated the adjudication process of the border dispute with Eritrea by turning it into a three-way affair. It also marked the resurgent of Tigrayan nationalism hitherto suppressed over a long time by dominance of Amharas in Ethiopia until the early 1990s.³⁸ All these structural warnings notwithstanding, serious deterioration of the relations between the two states began in 1997. The main accusations centred on the free flow of trade and investment. When a joint high ministerial commission met in

³⁷ Iyob R, "The Ethiopia-Eritrea Conflict: Diasporic Vs Hegemonic States in the Horn of Africa" op cit p 674

Asmara in 1995 to review the 1993 agreements, certain problems had begun to emerge on issues of citizenship, currency, union and common monetary policy, and free trade.

The TPLF dominance in Ethiopian government continued unabated. It asserted itself through the appointment of ethnic and political loyalist to head the economic, diplomatic and military institutions of the FDRE. As a result, OLF withdrew from the EPRDF accusing the TPLF of hegemonic domination and violation of political and human rights. Although the Eritrean government discreetly expressed its dismay at such practices, it chose not to heed the early warning signals and accepted TPLF as its equal partner.

These unfolding events on the ground swiftly overtook the joint commission inter-alia charged with the responsibility to resolve border issues. In January 1998, the Ethiopian government attempted to deploy forces in Assab area in Eritrea. Apparently, the aim of deploying forces was to establish facts on the ground similar to those of Badame and other areas before but Eritrean army frustrated their move. In May 1998; Ethiopia boycotted the use of Massawa and Assab amid claims that Eritrean authorities had barred them from using those ports. Later on, the Aerial bombardment of the port of Massawa and the Asmara international airport by Ethiopia aimed at placing an economic blockade on Eritrea.

Furthermore, there were signs of resumption of war by both states after eight months of lull. In a briefing to the African diplomatic community on 27 January 1999, Prime Minister Meles Zenawi warned on the possibility of returning to war activities:

"If some amongst us decide to play poker with the rule of law as exemplified by the OAU, If those very same forces have nothing but contempt for our collective decisions and

³⁸ See D Connell, "Letter from Eritrea", Nation online, 03/29/99 vol. 268 Issue 12.

continue to occupy the territory of member nation, we would not ask you to come to our rescue and fight our wars".³⁹

Likewise, Eritrea stationed over 40,000 troops⁴⁰ along the Badame front and used the eight months cease-fire to build well-protected defensive positions.

The Badame clashes only arose a crescendo of pent-up feelings of resentment in the form of ethnic slurs and re-interpretations of past grievances between Eritrea and Ethiopia. Both parties used the relative peace of the rainy season of 1998-1999 to rebuild their military strength by using national budget in purchasing arms rather than other development needs. Amid looming war between the two states, amassing of troops became imperative.⁴¹ Consequently, this drive for security replicated aggressive actions as both states either required a very high sense of security or felt menaced by the presence of each other's strength.⁴²

This chapter has recapitulated steps to the origin of conflict with the aim of capturing structural and dynamic indicators of this conflict. This serves as a background to whether there were indicators or warning signs and whether the response was timely or not as it will be argued out in Chapter Three and Four. While some cite unfair currency exchange as the cause that triggered the conflict, others cite the desire for territorial aggrandizement, the triumph of victor over vanquished and the absence of democratic values as the cause. However, a critical analysis of the formal and informal discourse of both sides over eight months indicate both states failed to address the structural and historical factors which precipitated the collapse of the alliance.

³⁹ T Negash and K Tronvoll, Brothers at War: Making Sense of the Eritrean-Ethiopian War, op cit. p 73.

⁴⁰ Ibid. p 2

⁴¹ Wolfgang H, "End of the African Renaissance?", New Routes: A Journal of Peace Research and Action, Vol. 4 No 4, 1999(pp23-28), p 4

⁴² R Jervis, "The Spiral of International Insecurity" in Smith M and Little R (ed.), Perspectives on World Politics, 2nd edition, (London and New York, Routledge, 1991) p 94

CHAPTER THREE

CONFLICT EARLY WARNING SYSTEMS

Introduction

Early warning systems first developed in areas of natural disasters and progressively in man-made disasters such as ensuing flow of refugees. During cold war period, military intelligence systems were designed to prevent a nuclear conflict among states. Since then there has been a growing interest in designing early warning systems to detect and signal conflicts for the purpose of making possible the use of preventive action instead of reactive action. According to Doom,¹ a number of factors have influenced the development of conflict early warning systems. These are communication technology, new perceptions on international security after the end of Cold War whose main concern centred on nuclear and inter-state conflict but now included also is internal conflict. The waning monopoly of power by state over its territory and its citizens, spill over effects of conflicts, rising costs of conflicts and the very limited success of peacekeeping and peace enforcing operations have also influenced the development of conflict early warning systems.

This chapter focuses on the models underpinning conflict early warning systems and how these models impact on the operation of early warning systems. This is because the instruments of data collection, analysis and response inform different types of conflict early warning systems. Further, the chapter will examine different types of conflict early warning systems in terms

¹ Doom Ruddy and Vlassenroot Koen, "Early Warning and Conflict Prevention: Minerva's Wisdom?", *The Journal of Humanitarian Assistance* at www.earlywarning.org/wisdom.html and www.earlywarning.org/wisdom.html, p 10

of structure, actors involved, analysis of information and response. The last part will examine strengths and weaknesses of each type of conflict early warning system.

Conflict Early Warning Models

A number of early warning models continue to inform different types of early warning systems. However, two models currently hold sway in conflict early warning i.e. Hard Early Warning model (HEW) and Soft Early Warning model (SEW). These two distinctive models continue to define various types of conflict early warning systems as espoused by Susanne et al.² The HEW model postulates that structures and rhythms leading to conflict fit into a pattern of law-like propositions. The anticipation of the probability of conflict and crisis, and possible means of intervening depends on observation of existing conflict conditions. This model treats early warning and development of conflict like a hard science with clear and unequivocal predictions since military interventions only occurs in clear-cut cases. By its out-ward orientation, HEW model tends to focus on other states other than themselves. This model leans towards interventionist approach where responses gravitate towards use of coercive power, formal authority and material influence possessed by the organization. This model presupposes existence of a large analytical capacity and surveillance system to track all external and internal factors that might lead to violent conflict. The two best examples of HEW based conflict early warning

² See Susanne Schmeidl, Ciru Mwaura and Howard Adelman, "Principles of The CEWARN Model" in Mwaura Ciru and Schmeidl, Susanne (ed), Early Warning and Conflict Management in The Horn of Africa, (Asmara, The Red sea Press, Inc, 2002) pp 170-173

systems are NATO and ECOWAS which have once, intervened militarily in conflicts in Kosovo and Liberia respectively.

The HEW oriented system is associated with traditional system of intelligence gathering commonly targeting strategic security concerns of states to protect their own national interests. The traditional intelligence systems rely on secrecy of information and classified communications. The HEW model is highly centralized and depends on in-house information collection and analyses with extremely limited levels of access.

On the other hand, the SEW model requires an information and analytical base that first stresses human and the welfare of all stakeholders rather than strategic state security. The SEW based conflict early warning system relies on information and analyses developed in a transparent system. The concern of SEW model is to anticipate and it's preventive idea is based on long-term planning involving non-military initiatives. Therefore, this model gravitates towards reliance on the influence of analysed information, common rules and legal regimes set by organizations involved in conflict early warning such as IGAD.³ Nevertheless, by classifying the analysed information it may restrict users to different levels. However, the type of actors involved in conflict monitoring and information analysis differentiates a centralized or closed conflict early warning system from integrated or open early warning system. A detailed differentiation of conflict early warning models is shown in the chart below. The following chart outlines four possible models (A, B1, B2 and B3) of early warning systems.

³ See Towards A Conflict Early Warning and Response Mechanism (CEWARN) for the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD). By The Forum on Early Warning and Response (FEWER) Team 15th OCTOBER 2002 p 14

Types of early warning systems- related to the instruments themselves

A. Intelligence Model	B. Transparency Model
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Situation room ▪ Encrypted communications ▪ A high degree of secrecy 	<p>1. <i>A centralized integrated model</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Hires its own local monitors ▪ Collects all the information ▪ Undertakes its own analysis ▪ Builds scenarios and options
	<p>2. <i>Quality control/dialogue model</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Relies on others to collect information ▪ Introduces and emphasizes quality control information ▪ Engages independent institutions to undertake analyses ▪ Initiates investigations in very specific areas and only when authorized ▪ Sets standards for documenting, formatting, communicating and reporting.
	<p>3. <i>A Passive model</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Relies on others for the collection and collection analysis of all information and simply passes on those analyses and scenarios onto the IGAD Secretariat

This chart was adopted from Summary Report, Towards A Conflict Early Warning and Response Mechanism (CEWARN) for the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD).

By the Forum on Early Warning and Response (FEWER) Team 15th OCTOBER 2002

Types of Early Warning Systems

All conflict early warning systems depend on the collection and analysis of information, scenario building and decision making. However, the process of collecting and analysing information, the actors involved in early warning process, dissemination of information and structure of decision making differentiates one system from another. Based on these two models there are two possible conflict early warning systems i.e. centralised or closed early warning system and open or integrated early warning system. These two different types of conflict early warning system are distinguished on the features namely approaches, collection and information analysis, decision making structures, actors and information output and use.

Closed Early Warning System

One of the distinguishing features of a closed early warning system is the approach used to design the system. This model leans towards an interventionist approach that mainly rely on formal cooperation with state institutions. The link between state institutions and other non state actors in building strong institutional mechanisms that copes up with conflict and crisis preventions are weak and often informal. By virtue of this approach, the operation of early warning system is shrouded in secrecy. The central challenge for identifying the early warning signs and determining the time limitation of conflict for early warning necessitates the type of early warning system to adopt a top-down approach. This often requires use of secret

means to gather secret information.⁴ The OAU and ECOWAS early warning systems are largely formal, top-down systems that fall under this category.

Closed early warning system therefore, relies on its own sources of information gatherers and analysts. The collection and analysis of information is centralized and this makes accessibility to be extremely limited to certain levels even by the members of the state apparatus.⁵ In OAU (currently AU), for example, processing of early warning information into strategic alternatives for each focal point in various states is centralized at one place.

The model employed by OAU and some of the sub-regional organizations depend more on secrecy and confidentiality than on the transparency and information sharing of an ideal warning system. The analyses of information tend to be processed through several layers of analysts with highly centralized control unit with only one clearance analyst or small groups of them who produces internally focused interpretative reports.⁶ The analyst prepare briefing based on the information to warn on an impending conflict and propose the mode of intervention to the Secretary-General who in turn, if need be submit such policy options to the central organ.

This is only possible when analysts rely on trend analysis as it is based on data gathered over a long period for a particular state or region. This is because prognoses can only be made of trends that are already in existence and for which no break is predicted. This being the case the system does not

⁴ See A. Walter Dorn, "Early Warning: An Introduction", accessed at www.acdi-cida.gc.ca/cida-ind.nst

⁵ The Fewer/IGAD Team Towards A Conflict Early Warning and Response Mechanisms (CEWARN) For The Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) Report Number 16, July 2000 p 21

⁶ For details, see Davies J, Conflict Early Warning and Early Response for Sub-Saharan Africa, Summary of Working Draft, Sept 2000. (A Paper Prepared for USAID, TULANE cert. Project).

take into account new information or other contexts of conflict. This vast amount of information very often results in information overload. This OAU model relies on qualitative data to complement and feed into quantitative analysis to enable scenario building and facilitate policy decisions, although ideally, the focus should be on raw data to inform the analytical process or cross-check one's own findings and assumptions. By placing emphasis on the quantitative analysis, the model is driven by the uncertainty of future conflict dynamics. A random factor always plays a role in human events and uncertainty about the future leads analysts to fear being wrong in their predictions.⁷

Similarly, the structure of the system reflects state-centric notion where states are accorded pivotal role in early warning as compared to other non-state actors. For example, ECOWAS early warning system is made up of an Observation-Monitoring Centre (OMC) located at ECOWAS secretariat in Abuja, Nigeria. The early warning system is further divided into four observation-monitoring zones each covered by a zonal Headquarter.⁸ The decision-making structure is elaborate involving Mediation Security Council, a Defence Security Commission (which reviews information gathered and analysis generated by the system) and a council of elders (involved in preventive diplomacy). The ECOWAS early warning reports are reviewed every three months by a Defence and Security committee that forwards recommendations to the mediation and Security Council. Similarly, the OAU decision-making structures involve a mandatory flow of information from the early warning unit (in-house analysis and production of early warning reports)

⁷ See A. Walter Dorn, "Early Warning: An Introduction", op cit

⁸ See Susanne Schmeidl, "Conflict Early Warning and Prevention: Toward a Coherent Terminology" in Mwaura Ciru and Schmeidl, Susanne (ed), Early Warning and Conflict Management in The Horn of Africa, (Asmara, The Red Sea Press, Inc, 2002) p 31

to the Secretary-General, who has discretion to share the analysis with the central organ.⁹ Decision-making authority therefore, rests with a limited section including the Secretary-General and in some instances the central organ. However, no other mechanisms are provided to involve non state actors as decision-makers in formal structures of OAU mechanism. The internal interpretive reports are generated for policy makers, which focuses on the substance of the assessment and the need to package the report to bring out available policy options cognizant of constraints facing the organization's capacity to respond.

By its nature, closed early warning system relies mainly on state actors to collect information at a state level. The system is sensitive to state security and strives to protect national interests and integrity of state borders. Therefore, in its operation, the system relies on one organization and the decision-makers are confined to interstate or governmental actors. In ECOWAS, for example, decision-making is restricted to defence and security personnel while civil society function largely as a source of information and is not formally incorporated into the ECOWAS decision-making framework. The failure to recognize local, traditional systems of authority and decision-making processes as critical components severely circumscribes early warning activities in information collection and response to conflict.¹⁰ On the other hand, the system is concerned with parties presumed to be adversaries to the stand of the organization's values rather than individual state behaviour within

⁹ See Ciru Mwaura, "Regional 'Early Warning and Conflict Management Mechanisms' in Mwaura Ciru and Schmeidl, Susanne (ed), *Early Warning and Conflict Management in The Horn of Africa*, (Asmara, The Red Sea Press, Inc, 2002) p 104

¹⁰ See Ciru Mwaura, "Regional Early Warning and Conflict Management Mechanisms' in *Early Warning and Conflict Management in The Horn of Africa* op cit p 112

the organization. This is in tune with OAU charter whose objective is to prevent perceived or actual threat to the values of the organization.

The traditional intelligence system collects and analyses information and communicates results secretly about warring member state(s). The analysed information is directed against member state(s) to the advantage of the organization.¹¹ The party or parties gathering information are presumed to be adversaries to the warring parties as in the case with intelligence analyst. They are supposed to provide a detailed picture of political power structures that helps to identify internal cracks in the target state. The targeted state can be manipulated to either maintain stability or induce a change in the preferred direction.¹² The limited choice of quantitative indicators produces far too general information, which is not sufficiently up to date. Its major drawback is that it takes little or no account of conflict dynamics and paints incomplete picture of background indicators.

These types of early warning tend to restrict accessibility to information. The OAU early warning system, for instance, tends to restrict public access to an inordinately broad range of information. The central organ is the operational arm of the mechanism and the primary user of a processed form of the information of the early warning system while other users are limited. While in ECOWAS, the Defence and Security Commission (DSC), is the immediate end-user of the early warning reports produced by the Sub-regional Peace and Security Observation System (SROMS). The DSC meets every three months

¹¹ Doom Ruddy and Vlassenroot Koen, "Early Warning and Conflict Prevention: Minerva's Wisdom?" op cit p 2

¹² Leatheman J, et al, Breaking Cycles of Violence: Conflict Prevention in Intra-State Crises. (Connecticut, Kumarian Press, 1999) p 34

and examines reports from the OMC's; make recommendations to MSC, which then decides what action to take.

Open Early Warning System

Open early warning systems embrace bottom-up approach where all actors from lower levels to the highest levels of decision-making are involved in the process. The local early warning actors at a micro-level (local) are linked with those at the state and sub-regional level. By integrating all levels of actors in collecting and analysing conflict, this system is suitable to monitor internal, interstate or regional development of conflict. This model leans towards a facilitative approach based on close co-operation with state institutions and civil society initiatives focused on building strong institutional mechanisms that enhances conflict prevention. CEWARN fits in this model, as its intent is to co-ordinate and facilitate rather than to control information and analysis.

The early warning unit draws upon public and secretive information to avoid inaccuracies and national biases. The units tend to work with information available in the public arena. The primary responsibility for the collection and analysis of information and creation of scenarios is rooted in the in-state conflict monitoring units. The in-state units provide the foundation on which accessibility to data and analysis is developed. For example, the in-state sources serve as the primary sources for data collection and analysis while IGAD as a facilitator sets standards, monitor and co-ordinate the results. The quality control system depends on networking with others on a give-and-

take basis using in-state sources.¹³ The system stresses on the welfare of others (human security) and information is meant to anticipate and prevent conflict.

The analysed information corroborates alarming reports and identifies areas where more information is needed. The analysis is needed to look for both the positive developments so that they can be reinforced as well as negative ones so that they can be countered. IGAD uses key conflict indicators generated by early warning mechanisms to develop the material for qualitative analysis. Trust is based on the quality of the analysis and the trust decision-makers develop in the process of early warning and early response overtime.¹⁴ The collection of information and analysis is transparently carried out. The analysis of information often incorporates multiple points of views from independently out-sourced organizations. The analysts are engaged in formulating case scenarios and response options. The analysis of primary information takes place at its source, which involves interpreting basic components such as changes in behavioural patterns, changes in power relationship, unexpected events and their dynamics. The information nucleus is based on local experience, which is directed towards a higher level, expanded and ultimately supplemented by further layers of analyses of the areas of potential conflict locally and regionally.¹⁵ The purpose of analysis is to examine possible connections that exist between dynamic factors and historical variables and their impact on potential conflict. The analysis helps in understanding formation of conflict and for formulating a prevention strategy.

¹³ The Fewer/IGAD Team, Towards A Conflict Early Warning and Response Mechanisms (CEWARN) op cit p 52

¹⁴ *ibid* p 32

¹⁵ See Blenessi Eva, "Ethnic Early Warning Systems and Conflict Prevention", Global Security Fellows Initiative Occasional Paper No 11, University of Cambridge. p 8

Therefore, the analysis informs decision-making process by formulating strategic options directed at taking preventive action. In IGAD, early warning units are independent to avoid influencing the analysis to reinforce the mode of action. Furthermore, response mechanisms apply at all levels of CEWARN as well as CEWERUs in the effort of sharing responsibility. The collection and analysis of information is developed at appropriate level to the sources of the information and the breadth of the conflict.¹⁶ The Open early warning system develops and relies on very explicit indicators, which reveal both the background conditions against which conflicts develop and its escalation dynamics to set information and response in specific context. The open early warning system is dynamic as qualitative analysis and response options are set in specific context of the conflict. It incorporates existing traditional or locally rooted initiatives in developing scenarios for response. This type of early warning system draws on and supports the tools at hand within a particular local context, and forges synergies among actors at various levels of power and authority.

An integrated early warning system is highly decentralized and depends on significant involvement of civil society for information input and independent analysis. The effectiveness of the integrated early warning system depends on co-operation of all actors involved in early warning rather than on one state or organization. Furthermore, information sharing and collaboration is key to the success of open early warning system. That is why CEWARN and IGAD only co-ordinates and facilitates the process of developing common information handling, management and exchange approaches. The integration of local,

¹⁶ See Towards A Conflict Early Warning and Response Mechanism (CEWARN) for The Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), Summary Report-Fewer Team, 15 October, 2000 p 19

national and regional levels improves quality and quantity of relevant information collected.¹⁷

Since information is at the centre of an effective system of conflict warning, the warning system should operate with open sources of input. It is in this regard that Vorkunov¹⁸ emphasizes the need for networking in order to ensure accuracy, accessibility and sufficiency of information for a timely and reliable response to conflicts. Unlike closed early warning system, an open early warning system disseminates and shares information transparently although the information might be classified and restricted to different levels of users. Unlike ECOWAS and OAU, the role of IGAD is to facilitate rather than control information flow. The effectiveness of an early warning system is predicated on the quality of early warning information, analysis and scenario building and options. The authority of IGAD emanates from the quality of early warning information, which is ensured through objective reporting, insight analysis, efficiency, specific and realistic recommendations.

Appraisal of Early Warning Systems

The open and closed early warning systems depend on the collection and analysis of information, scenario building and communication to decision-makers. However, each type of the system has its unique strength and implicit weaknesses. In appraising conflict early warning systems, three critical issues in the collection and analysis of early warning information arise.

¹⁷ The FEWER/IGAD Team, Towards A Conflict Early Warning and Response Mechanisms (CEWARN) for The Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), Report Number 16 July 2000, p 21

¹⁸ Vorkunova, Olga A, "Early Warning in The Third World Millennium: A Systems Approach to The Problem of Advance Conflict", Social Alternatives, July 96, Vol, 15 Issue 3 p 27

These are access to information, its validity and reliability, and the degree of openness in the utilization of information.

The bureaucratic nature of centralized conflict early warning system may badly distort information and delay information delivery at the central processing unit. By the virtue of concentrating processing and analysing information at one point, the vast amount of information very often results in overload of information in the closed early warning system.¹⁹ This top-down approach fails to engage and support local alternative mechanisms that exist and function at grassroots level.²⁰ Since the use of information is determined by institutional and political factors, inflexible bureaucracies and great distance between potential conflict theatre and the place of designing responses tend to negate the principle of effective warning and the response.

Furthermore, the limited choice of quantitative analysis based on abstract or quantitative indicators produces far too general information, which is not sufficiently up to date. Its major drawback is that it takes little or no account of conflict dynamics and paints incomplete picture of background indicators.²¹ Although the analysis is guided by comprehensive approach encompassing both qualitative and quantitative methodologies, however, due to over-reliance on quantitative methods, this system faces the problem of inaccessibility to data.

¹⁹ Leatherman J, et al, Breaking Cycles of Violence: Conflict Prevention in Intrastate Crises, (Connecticut, Kumarian Press, 1999) p 39

²⁰ Blenesi Eva, "Ethnic Early Warning Systems and Conflict Prevention", Global Security Fellows Initiative Occasional Paper No 11, University of Cambridge.

²¹ Doom Ruddy and Vlassenroot Koen, "Early Warning and Conflict Prevention: Minerva's Wisdom?", Journal of Humanitarian Assistance at www.early%20warning%20and%20wisdom.html, p 13

Although non-state actors function largely as a source of information, they are excluded in the decision-making structures. The decision-making process is only confined to intergovernmental actors. This failure to recognize critical components such as local, traditional systems of authority and decision-making processes severely circumscribes early warning activities. Similarly, inadequate capacity in the collection and analysis of information has impeded, for instance the OAU in providing decision-makers with substantive policy information. Furthermore, OAU early warning structures tend to restrict public access to an inordinately broad range of information.

However, the strength of an open early warning system is that it adopts a bottom-up approach that integrates all actors from local, national and interstate level in collecting information and decision-making. This approach reinforces networking within and among states. It relies on direct communications and therefore, fosters an environment of co-operation and civilian conflict resolution. Consequently, an open early warning system focuses on the problems affecting all actors and cutting across all levels of the societies and member states.

It is a process-oriented focused on the whole life cycle of a conflict rather than on the mere outbreak of violence. By relying on qualitative analysis and deriving authority from quality analysis and reporting, IGAD for example, avoids false expectations that are unlikely to be fulfilled. The responsibilities of early warning are separated from the responsibilities of proposing response options.

This ensures that each responsible body is accountable for failures at early warning and early response.²² By including all actors in information processing, priority and potential information sources are actively identified as part of the feed back loop in the information system. The analysis of incoming information at a lower level results in the identification of further information requirements at a higher level. An Open early warning system like CEWARN allows early warning unit to receive information and analyses from in-state early warning units in which civil society elements play a significant role. There is a two-way communication as IGAD also passes on the information to the civil society. However, it requires a large analytical capacity for all parts of the system to track both internal and external factors that contribute to development of violent conflict and to verify sources of information.

An open early warning system requires large capacity to harmonize information due to different sources of information supply. The different actors engaged in information gathering have different structures and emphasize different information content. The information gathered through existing information network therefore, require harmonization to link together all relevant information. Furthermore, there is need for large capacity to collect and analyse available information for decision-making organs to make informed decisions. The basis on which policy-makers make choices of response limits the capacity of such decision-makers not only to anticipate a conflict but also in determining the appropriate response to a particular conflict.

²² See A. Walter Dorn, "Towards an Effective UN Early Warning System: A Review and Some Recommendations" (excerpt from A. Walter Dorn, "Early and Late Warning by The UN Secretary-General of Threats to the Peace: Article 99 Revisited" in Woodcock, Ted and David (ed), TheCornwalls Group V: Analysis for Crisis Response and Societal Reconstruction, (Canadian Peacekeeping Press, Ns, 2000), P 357.

CHAPTER FOUR

CONFLICT EARLY WARNING MECHANISM (CEWARN)

Introduction

Violence has always been part of human history and its prevention remains one of the key global challenges.¹ This challenge has led to the establishment of numerous structures for the maintenance of peace and security in Africa. The OAU Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution is the sole mechanism at the regional level. However, there are several structures at the sub-regional level, notably the ECOWAS' protocol on the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security established in 1999; IGAD Conflict Early Warning and Response Mechanism (CEWARN) established in 2002 and the SADC Protocol on Politics, Defence and Security for Southern Africa.

In spite of the existence of these structures, the effectiveness of these structures in meeting the rising expectations to effectively preventing violent conflicts is still wanting. There are a number of shortfalls, which hamper the effective functioning of these structures. In the case of the OAU Mechanism, institutional capacities for conflict prevention, management and resolution remain weak. However, the main concern of this chapter is on IGAD conflict early warning mechanism and the extent to which the existing Mechanism and Protocol are dynamic enough to prevent, manage, resolve conflict and also ensure sustainable peace and security in the Horn of Africa.

¹ Lionel Cliffe and Philip White, "Conflict Management and Resolution in The Horn of Africa" in Mwaura Ciru and Schmeidl, Susanne (ed), Early Warning and Conflict Management in The Horn of Africa, (Asmara, The Red Sea Press, Inc, 2002) p 45

IGAD was established in 1996 to supersede IGADD that was founded in 1986. It is a sub-regional organization comprising of seven member countries in the Horn of Africa namely Uganda, Somalia, Kenya, Sudan, Ethiopia, Eritrea and Djibouti. Although IGADD was originally created to co-ordinate member states' efforts in preventing drought and desertification, it became apparent that IGADD could only address interrelated problems affecting the sub-region comprehensively by integrating conflict, political and socio-economic issues. Following the revitalization of IGAD and its shift towards a broader development mandates, issues on peace and security in the region were prioritised. The basis of creating a conflict early warning mechanism (CEWARN) for IGAD fell within the peace and security agenda as a key area of focus in the institution's conflict prevention, management and resolution mandate. CEWARN is an autonomous institution within IGAD. This shift has been necessitated by the realization for the need to focus more on early action. It is in this regard that regional and sub-regional organizations in Africa and elsewhere have prioritised the issue of an early warning in an effort to enhance regional responses to violent conflict.

Apparently, the focus of conflict remedies has increasingly shifted from reactionary management to institutionalised early conflict prevention. As an initial measure to address and resolve the numerous intra-state and interstate pastoral conflicts existing in the Horn of Africa region, IGAD institutionalised an early warning and response mechanism (CEWARN). The initial focus of CEWARN is on monitoring, collecting and exchanging information on pastoral conflicts taking place within the cross-border areas. In attempt to show to what extent CEWARN could have impacted on Ethiopia-Eritrea conflict, this chapter will examine the legal basis of CEWARN, information processing,

institutional and decision-making structures of CEWARN in realising its mandate in early warning and early response.

Legal Basis of CEWARN

CEWARN was envisaged in consideration of the existing conflict system in the Horn of Africa.² It is because of this reason that CEWARN was developed to prevent violent conflict in co-operation with similar mechanisms like OAU and UN. The legal basis of CEWARN gives it a distinct legal identity by establishing clear structures of decision-making and information sharing for optimum operation. The founding basis of CEWARN is guided by the philosophy of building on the existing in-state mechanisms mainly in conflict management and famine early warning whose concern had excluded conflict early warning hence the need for harmonization. The legal basis of CEWARN revolves on creating a relationship between various legal structures such as the Agreement establishing IGAD, Khartoum Declaration, Bilateral agreements, National laws, Protocols governing CEWARN and subsequent memorandum of understanding that may be signed by CEWARN.³

The legal structure to institutionalise CEWARN centres on the Agreement establishing IGAD. According to Article 7(7) of the Agreement establishing IGAD, the Authority's aim is to promote peace and stability in the sub-region and create mechanisms within the sub-region for the prevention, management and resolution of interstate and intra-state conflicts through dialogue. The creation of legal identity for CEWARN through protocols is

² On what constitutes a conflict system see M Mwagiru, Conflict: Theory, Processes and Institutions of Management, (Nairobi, Watermark, Publications, 2000) p 79

³ Makumi Mwagiru "The Legal Framework for CEWARN" in Mwaura Ciru and Schmeidl, Susanne (ed), Early Warning and Conflict Management in The Horn of Africa, (Asmara, The Red Sea Press, Inc, 2002) p 198

based on the authority derived from the establishing Agreements, which permits negotiation and conclusions of supplementary Agreements and Protocols.⁴ The approved Protocols become integral part of the IGAD establishing Agreement.

The Khartoum Declaration⁵ contains formal approval by Heads of state of IGAD member states to create CEWARN. The Declaration epitomises political will necessary for supporting the establishment of CEWARN. Unlike the case with general resolutions, Khartoum Declaration is binding as it derives its legal status from authoritative decision by the Heads of state and Governments. Further, it supports the process of institutionalising CEWARN. This process entails making some internal administrative adjustments in member states, regarding in-state early warning mechanisms to fit in the structure of CEWARN.⁶

Subsequent to the Khartoum Declaration, protocols establishing CEWARN further gives CEWARN a legal identity in its operation and functioning.⁷ The final Protocol establishing CEWARN strengthens the Khartoum Declaration and gives substance to establishing the CEWARN mechanism by mandating only those member states of IGAD who have ratified the Protocol to participate in CEWARN. It confers legal identity on CEWARN under Article 3 and subsequently sets out structures, functions and structures of co-operation. The protocol comprehensively outlines

⁴ See Article 17(1) of The Agreement Establishing The Intergovernmental Authority On Development, IGAD/Sum-96/AGRE-DOC, Nairobi, March, 1996

⁵ Khartoum Declaration of the 8th Summit of Heads of States and Government, Khartoum, 23rd November 2000.

⁶ Makumi "The Legal Framework for CEWARN" in Mwaura Ciru and Schmeidl, Susanne (ed), Early Warning and Conflict Management in The Horn of Africa, op cit p199

⁷ See Article 3 of The Final Protocol on The Establishment of A Conflict Early Warning and Response Mechanism For IGAD Member States, Launched in the First Week of September 2002 in Addis Ababa

institutionalisation and functioning of CEWARN covering Policy organs (Council of Ministers, Assembly and Committee of Ambassadors), Administrative arm (secretariat), the technical arm (CEWARN and CEWERUs), Co-operating arm (optional inter-state structures and sub-regional council and Co-ordinating arm (Committee of Permanent Secretaries and Committee on early warning).

Similarly, IGAD member states' national laws on information and security that are in accord with provisions of CEWARN Protocols and operating guidelines of CEWARN form legal basis of CEWARN. The legal basis of CEWARN builds on existing national laws. It is specified in the operating guidelines of CEWARN on dissemination of information that national laws would be reviewed where necessary to confirm to CEWARN requirements.⁸ The national laws involved include those dealing with information and sources of information as well as its dissemination. Notable are the official secrets Acts of various states which could affect the potential of sharing information between states as well as between in-state mechanism and CEWARN.⁹

While the Agreement establishing IGAD, the Khartoum Declaration, the Protocol establishing CEWARN and existing national laws constitute the legal framework that informs the foundation of CEWARN, other provisions are provided for creating some other legal structures to enhance proper functioning of CEWARN. Article 3(1) of The Protocol establishing CEWARN provides for the conclusion of Agreements between CEWARN and other

⁸ See Article 3(1) and 3(2) of The Final Protocol on The Establishment of A Conflict Early Warning and Response Mechanism For IGAD Member States, Launched in the First Week of September 2002 in Addis Ababa

⁹ See Makumi Mwagiru, "The Legal Framework for CEWARN" in Mwaura Ciru and Schmeidl, Susanne (ed), Early Warning and Conflict Management in The Horn of Africa, (Asmara, The Red Sea Press, Inc, 2002) p 208

international, regional and sub-regional organizations by way of memoranda. The CEWARN early warning mechanism was institutionalised and formalized in June 2002 in Entebbe, Uganda by the Committee of Permanent Secretaries.

Institutional Structure of CEWARN

CEWARN has a structure that defines its mode of operation. This includes; Policy arm (council, assembly and committee of Ambassadors), Administrative arm (secretariat), the Technical arm (CEWARN and CEWERUs), Co-operating arm (optional inter-state structures and sub-regional council and Co-ordinating arm (Committee of Permanent Secretaries and Committee on early warning).

The institutionalisation of CEWARN is aimed at reflecting regional framework whose members are part of The Horn of Africa. The Horn of Africa is characterized by a conflict system that typifies the regional conflicts linked together by frontiers. The reason for institutionalisation is to entrench sound decision-making base for effective operation. Further, it enshrines consultative processes of CEWARN and defines precisely how CEWERU operating at state level fit into CEWARN.¹⁰ By institutionalising CEWARN structures, entry points for civil societies were created in decision-making processes and thus mainstreams the role of civil society in the CEWARN by enlisting their services in information collection, analysis and consultations on information uses. The process also addresses and clarifies various operational issues such as the fundamental role of IGAD as a facilitator in the

¹⁰ *ibid* p 193

conflict early warning and early response process. The involvement of diverse actors other than state in information gathering confines IGAD to the role of facilitating early warning process as well as processing and analysing the information gathered.

Institutionalising political structures of CEWARN is crucial in order to synchronize the political and decision-making aspects of CEWARN operations. The political structures are concerned with those aspects of CEWARN that are not captured by the legal structures but they are very crucial to its effective and efficient functioning as a conflict early warning and early response mechanism. The establishment of political structures underscore the sovereignty basis of the regional framework and the challenge of CEWARN working with national jurisdictions as well as administrative and decision-making structures. However, member states retain decision-making powers with respect to CEWARN operations while IGAD secretariat co-ordinates CEWARN functions.

In order to capture the diversity and linkages of the regional actors in conflict, CEWARN operates at three levels: sub-national, national and regional. Co-operation cutting across these different levels of the mechanism is essential for proper functioning of the system. The institutional structure of CEWARN reflects the challenge of integrating these national and sub-national mechanisms into larger regional CEWARN framework especially as each level involves both official state actors and non-state actors. The conflict early warning mechanisms at the sub-national level feed into national conflict early warning and early response units (CEWERUs) and CEWARN for proper functioning.

The sub-national mechanism of early warning and early response is composed of an optional steering committee, a focal point and local committees. The steering committee reports directly to committee of

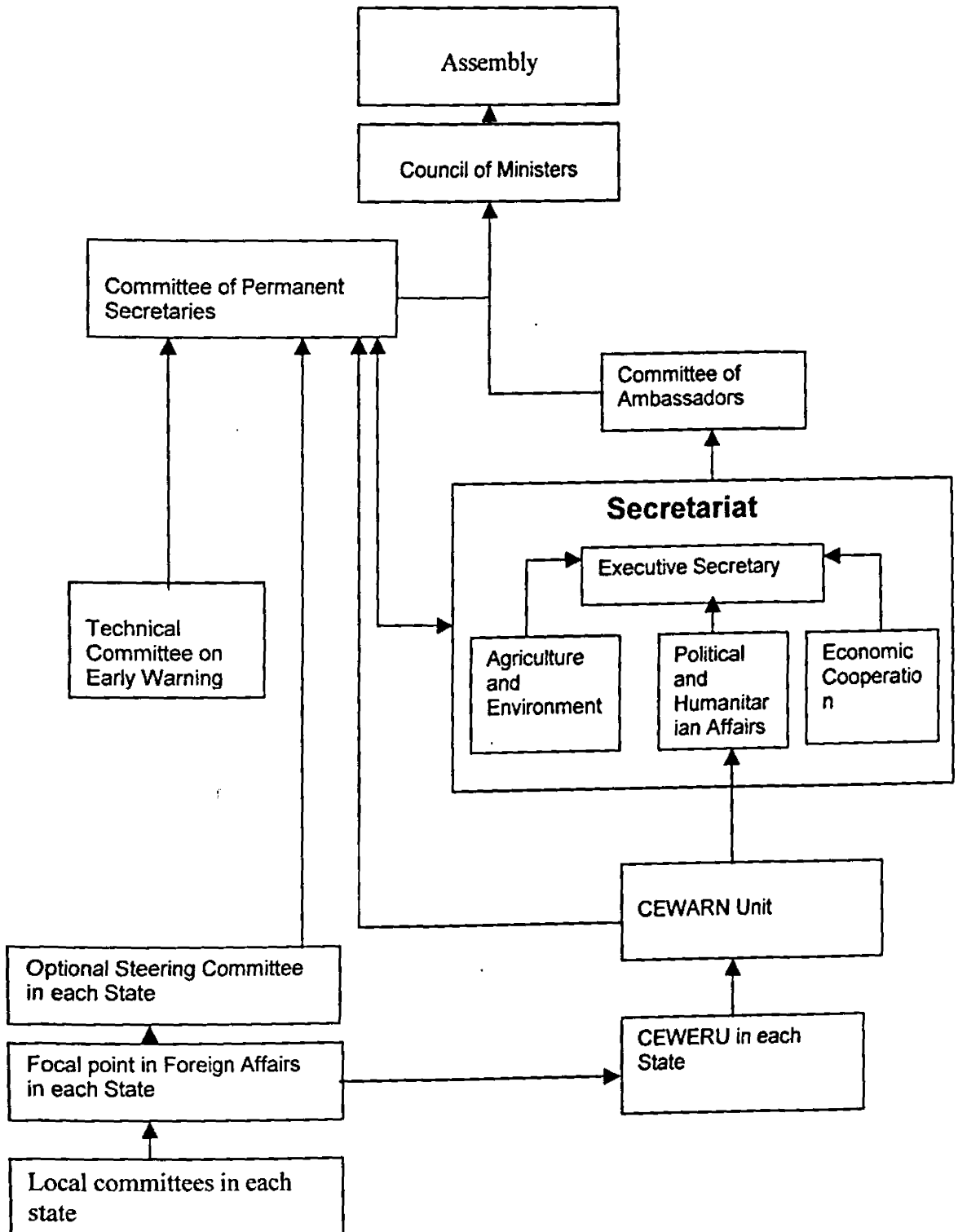
permanent secretaries. The focal points for CEWARN are imperative because different departments of governments of member states are involved in the process of collecting, collating and analysing information at the national level. There are important as points of contact between member states and the secretariat in its role of facilitating and co-ordinating activities of CEWARN.¹¹ Therefore, a steering committee, a focal point and local committees feed into national conflict early warning and early response units (CEWERUs), which are linked to IGAD through the CEWARN unit and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in each member state serving as focal point for communications between CEWERUs and CEWARN.

At the regional level, the regional structure of early warning consists of CEWARN unit, the secretariat, Committee on early warning, committee of permanent secretaries, Committee of Ambassadors, Council of Ministers and the Assembly. The CEWARN unit is linked to the IGAD secretariat through the Directorate of Political and Humanitarian Affairs. The Committee on early warning is composed of committee of permanent secretaries, representatives from civil society and independent research institutions linked to CEWARN through Committee of Permanent Secretaries.

The Committee of Permanent Secretaries serves as a link between the Assembly, the Council of Ministers, Committee of Ambassadors and the Secretariat. The Committee of Ambassadors' role is to guide the Secretariat in interpreting the policies. The Council of Ministers makes recommendations to the Assembly and monitors implementation of the decision of the Assembly. The Assembly is the supreme organ of the Authority responsible for making policy.

¹¹ Makumi Mwagiru "The Legal Framework for CEWARN" in Mwaura Ciru and Schmeidl, Susanne (ed), Early Warning and Conflict Management in The Horn of Africa, (Asmara, The Red sea Press, Inc, 2002) pp205-206.

INSTITUTIONAL STRUCTURE OF CEWARN



Information Processing

CEWARN is the mechanism that addresses in a continuous and sustained fashion conflict prevention, conflict management, and conflict resolution. To carry out its task, it undertakes, among other tasks, continuous research, collects data, processes and analyses the data, and submit its findings to the IGAD Secretariat for decision-making. CEWERUs are tasked with the responsibility of: collecting information relevant to early warning and response, liaise with civil society groups involved in collecting information at the grassroots and other levels, undertaking preliminary analysis of collected information, reviewing analyses received, formulating response strategies, preparing periodic conflict early warning reports and communicating information and analysis gathered to the CEWARN Unit. Structurally, CEWERUs are linked to IGAD through the CEWARN Unit and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in each member state and serve as the focal point for communications between CEWERUs and CEWARN.

CEWARN relies on the information available in the public domain and information collected through overt means. Sharing of information is structured in a way to enhance functioning and integrity of CEWARN. The structure of sharing information is the centrepiece of CEWARN operations. It creates the legal basis for information including how it is shared and with whom.¹² The Ministries of Foreign Affairs serve as communication links between the CEWERUs and CEWARN. It spells out the functions of both CEWARN and IGAD Secretariat in information sharing, thereby reducing a

¹² Makumi Mwagiru "The Legal Framework for CEWARN" in Mwaura Ciru and Schmeidl, Susanne (ed), Early Warning and Conflict Management in The Horn of Africa, (Asmara, The Red Sea Press, Inc, 2002) p203.

potential area of operational conflict between the two. The Protocol establishing CEWARN creates a committee on information sharing composed of Permanent Secretaries that meet twice a year and it establishes the right of civil society to access information and analysis on different matters.

The member states are required to facilitate the verification and analysis of information within their territories by officials of CEWARN. The request for permission to verify and analyse information in the member states is facilitated by the Executive Secretary. CEWARN is empowered to commission academic and research institutions to undertake analysis of information received by the CEWARN Unit (The CEWARN unit falls under the Political and Humanitarian Affairs Division of the IGAD Secretariat). The analyses carried out are made available to all users subject to the approval by the Committee on early warning. The optional Steering Committee of each CEWERU is responsible for reviewing such reports and reporting the outcome of its review to CEWARN. On receipt of the reports from the Steering Committees, CEWARN immediately forwards them to the Committee of Permanent Secretaries who communicates all such information and analysis to decision-makers of IGAD policy organs and the national governments of member states.

Decision-making Structures

The onus challenge, which CEWARN faced, was how to incorporate existing interstate frameworks of conflict management and include other actors in decision-making. This required IGAD to re-examine its decision-making apparatus to have a clear mandate to accommodate CEWARN. The earlier decision-making apparatus of IGAD reflected purely diplomatic and political concerns of IGAD but not the peculiar needs of CEWARN. This is

because IGAD exclusively involved the Committee of Ambassadors, the Council of Ministers and the Assembly in decision-making. New decision-making structures for CEWARN had to be established to complement the earlier ones.¹³ IGAD did not properly integrate Permanent Secretaries into its decision-making structures although they served an important link between Council of Ministers and Committee of Ambassadors. By outlining an adequate decision-making structure, CEWARN replete the institutional gap to facilitate the revitalized IGAD mandate. This therefore, enhanced the responsiveness and functioning of regional decision-making structures for effective early response mechanism. IGAD therefore, transformed these highly centralized decision-making centres into more inclusive processes. The provision of decision-making structures in a legal framework ensures proper functioning of conflict early warning and early response mechanism.

The protocol establishes consultation mechanisms and sets out levels of consultation, actors involved in the consultation process, sets periods for consulting and frequency of consultation. Consultations between representatives of CEWARN and CEWERUs are held at least twice a year while consultations between CEWERUs and local units, are held quarterly or as each member state determines. These consultation processes enshrine a central role for the governments and importantly establish a Committee of Permanent Secretaries.¹⁴ The Committee of Permanent Secretaries whose members are drawn from IGAD member countries' Ministries of Foreign Affairs is tasked with responsibilities of linking and harmonizing co-ordination between the CEWARN Unit, CEWERUs, the IGAD Secretariat, the Council of Ministers, the Committee of Ambassadors and the civil society. In addition,

¹³ See Article 4(1) of The Final Protocol Establishing CEWARN

¹⁴ Article 9(3)

the Committee of Permanent Secretaries makes recommendations for early prevention of conflicts. In this respect, the Committee of Permanent Secretaries functions as the highest organ for the CEWARN and is mandated to guide and oversee the interaction of the IGAD Secretariat, the CEWARN Unit, CEWERUs and civil society in conducting the early warning work in the sub-region.

The interaction of various organs of CEWARN underscores the fact that early warning is essentially a decision-supporting tool. The emphasis is not simply on producing early warning analyses but in developing regional response architecture.¹⁵ Sophisticated early warning analyses and clearly established decision-making structures and channels of communication complement each other. An adequate information and correct identification of the problem is not always the most crucial aspect of early warning. Having adequate information notwithstanding, it is important to have an established procedure as to what to do once an early warning signal is issued. The imperative to involve policy-makers in the process of formulating policy options and case scenarios aptly highlights the importance of early response to early warning. This helps in fine tuning early warning by adapting to user needs, to build trust in the analysis and recommendations to influence overall policy planning and also to function as a pressure mechanism".¹⁶

The necessity to link CEWARN to decision-making organs is informed by likelihood of enhancing responses to potential conflicts. Clearly established links between CEWARN and decision-making organs are provided for in the

¹⁵ Mwaura Ciru and Schmeidl, Susanne (ed), Early Warning and Conflict Management in The Horn of Africa, (Asmara, The Red Sea Press, Inc, 2002) p 12

¹⁶ Susanne schmeidl, "Conflict Early Warning and Prevention: Toward A Coherent Terminology" in Mwaura Ciru and Schmeidl, Susanne (ed), Early Warning and Conflict Management in The Horn of Africa, (Asmara, The Red Sea Press, Inc, 2002) p 85

structure of CEWARN to reduce the gap between warning and response.¹⁷ The establishment of these structures reinforces the greatest strength of CEWARN that rests in the quality control dialogue model. CEWARN acts as a facilitator rather than an implementer and continues to establish close links to existing in-state mechanisms (CEWERUs). The institutional decision-making structure fosters regular in-depth regional consultation and informed response on conflict issues.¹⁸

Decision-making process

CEWARN is mandated to receive and contribute to information sharing concerning the outbreak and escalation of conflict in the IGAD region. The Executive Secretary is mandated to carry out the task in consultation with the Committee of Permanent Secretaries. On receiving early warning information, the Executive Secretary is immediately required to bring that information to the attention of the Committee of Permanent Secretaries. On receiving such information from the Executive Secretary, the Committee of Permanent Secretaries reviews the options and makes immediate recommendations to the Council of Ministers. The Committee of Permanent Secretaries decides what part of the information or analysis should be made available in the public domain.¹⁹

CEWARN is mandated to commission independent institutions to undertake analysis of information received by the CEWARN Unit. The analysis reduces the very large set of possible events to a much smaller set of plausible

¹⁷ Susanne Schmeidl, Ciru Mwaura and Howard Adelman, "Principles of The CEWARN Model" in Mwaura Ciru and Schmeidl, Susanne (ed), Early Warning and Conflict Management in The Horn of Africa, (Asmara, The Red Sea Press, Inc, 2002) pp 177-178

¹⁸ *ibid* pp 183-184

¹⁹ See Part I of The Mandate on Operating Guidelines for CEWARN

events. The sets of early warning indicators are trimmed to develop the "best possible case scenarios" and "worst possible case scenarios".²⁰ The analyses carried out are made available to all users subject to the approval by the Committee on early warning.²¹ The optional Steering Committee of each CEWERU is responsible for reviewing such reports and reporting the outcome of its review to CEWARN. On receipt of the reports from the Steering Committees, CEWARN immediately forwards them to the Committee of Permanent Secretaries.²²

Upon receiving information from CEWARN, the Committee of Permanent Secretaries makes recommendations for early response to the Council of Ministers. This council is mandated to promote peace and security in the sub-region. Further, the Council receives and reviews reports from subsidiary organs and makes recommendations to the Assembly.²³ The Assembly is mandated under Article 9(1) of Agreement establishing IGAD to make policy, direct and control the functioning of the organization. While the Committee of Ambassadors under Article 11(2) of Agreement establishing IGAD advises the Executive Secretary on the promotion of his efforts in realizing the work plan approved by the Council of Ministers. The feedback is accomplished when the Secretariat mandated under Article 12(2) implements the decision of the Assembly and the Council.

The decision-making structure set out in the Protocol establishing CEWARN provides sustained and inclusive consultations from the local level

²⁰ For details see Schrod A Philip and Deborah J Gerner, "The Impact of Early Warning on Institutional Responses to Complex Humanitarian Crises", (A Paper Presented at The Third Pan-European International Relations Conference and Joint meeting with The International Studies Association, Vienna, 16-19, September, 1998).

²¹ Refer to Article 10 of The Protocol on The Establishment of A Conflict Early Warning and Response Mechanism for IGAD Member States

²² See Part iii on Verification and Analysis of The Operating Guidelines for CEWARN

all the way up to the Committee of Permanent Secretaries and provides for continuous monitoring and analysis to be undertaken by research institutions in the region. The role of IGAD through CEWARN provides a dialogue process by facilitating early warning, prevention and management of conflict.

In spite of this neatly laid down decision-making structure, decision-making process is subject to decision-makers' interpretations of the past. Since policy-makers generally prefer to put off hard choices as long as possible, continuous search for exhaustive warning information process by CEWARN is likely to delay response to conflicts. Furthermore, the reward-cost aspect of seeking to establish correct warning signal can sharply reduce the policy-makers' receptivity to emerging information threats, as early warning does not necessarily lead to early response. On the contrary, warning might force policy-makers to confront difficult or unpalatable decisions. Moreover, the policy "background" against which new information is judged can strengthen the tendency to ignore or downgrade a lot of information that challenges existing beliefs or exacerbates decision dilemmas.²⁴

Nevertheless, warning information gives policy-makers time to either step up efforts to acquire more information about the situation, to rehearse the decision problem that they are likely to face if the warning proves to be genuine, to review their commitments and contingency plans or to seize the opportunity to avert a possible dangerous crisis. In this regard conflict warning provides an opportunity to deal with the conflict or the misperceptions associated with it before

²³ Article 10(2) of the Agreement Establishing IGAD

²⁴ See George Alexander and Jane Holt, "The Warning -Response Problem and Missed Opportunities in Preventive Diplomacy, Discussion Paper, Carnegie Commission on Preventing Deadly Conflict, (Washington DC, Carnegie Corporation of New York, 1997) p

it leads to violence. Imprecise warning makes policy-makers to confront the question of what types of response are useful and acceptable in the face of uncertain warning. This trade off dilemma in responding to potential conflict is dealt with by calibrated warning-response system of CEWARN that is structured from sub-national, national to regional level.

The decision-making process is informed by two competing approaches, rational and bureaucratic. A rational decision-making process involves identifying alternatives and their respective consequences in comparison with goals to be achieved. However, human and financial resources spent on acquiring exhaustive information needed to execute rational decisions are limited. This is because decision-makers have individual psychological and organizational screens that limit decision-making based only on selected data instead of perfect information.²⁵ In the effort to avoid overload, decision-maker chooses what to consider and this obscures true warning signals. However, the requirement of perfect decision-making is paradoxical as seeking for perfect information tends to conflict with decision-maker's bureaucratic and psychological screens of eliminating information overload. Conversely, CEWARN reduces this information overload through analysis at both national and regional level thus effectively cutting down on the amount of information for effective decision-making.²⁶ The rational approach hinges on the best use of information available in choosing from the universe of possible responses that are likely to maximize the set goals. In this regard, rationality is taken as a sequence of decision-making activities involving problem recognition, definition, goal selection, identification of

²⁵ Bruce Russett and Harvey Starr, World Politics: The Menu for Choice, (New York, WH Freeman and Company, 1989) p 266

²⁶ Ibid p 267

alternatives and choice.²⁷ This approach is limited to the extent that it requires perfect information to recognize potential conflicts accurately and make decisions. However, not all decisions are based on perfect information.

Contrary to rational approach, the bureaucratic approach such as the one embraced by CEWARN decision-making structure define rules and standard operating procedures that specify how tasks are to be performed and divides authority among different organizations or departments to avoid duplication of efforts. This approach draws attention to the "pulling and hauling" which occurs among the key participants in the decision-making process.²⁸ What organizations are prepared to do shapes what is considered possible. However, this institutional mind-set encourages reliance on standard operating procedures and deference to precedent rather than exploration of new options to meet new challenges.

Furthermore, decision-making process is influenced by political environment and this determines what is possible and what course of action is more or less likely under those particular circumstances. How decision-makers see the environment and the content of its image is vital in terms of creating policy, planning or decision-making. Although the world only impacts on decisions and actions taken, individual perception continues to inform the feedback from the world. Therefore, a single decision-maker or small groups of decision-makers' environment structure the nature of the decision, the options available, the consequences, costs and benefits of these options. Anything that affects the structural possibilities of the environment within which decisions must act, also affects the incentive structures for those

²⁷ Charles W. Kegley and Eugene R. Wittkopf, World Politics: Trends and Transformation, (New York, St. Martins Press. inc., 1997) p 51

²⁸ Ibid p 56

decision-makers. The capabilities of actors, for example, make some actions possible (opportunity) and at the same time make some actions more attractive and others less attractive (willingness). Therefore, both opportunity and willingness have some bearing on the likely responses to any conflict. This is the environment in which CEWARN is likely to operate in and any judgment on its effectiveness shall be based on this reality.

The effectiveness of early warning response mirrors several aspects of early warning including technical aspects of information collection and analysis, its institutional aspects/communication channels and decision-making processes as well as its response side. The failure on response side of conflict prevention results from technical, institutional constraints, situational and political conditions. The process of developing case scenarios and policy options of early warning actually decreases the warning-response gap. These case scenarios and policy options improves the analytical capacity that flows into early warning processes and enhances the political will to initiate early response.²⁹

The emphasis on preventive results leads to a situation whereby lack of preventive actions is considered a function of early warning failure. In fact, it is failure to take action on the basis of available information that often leads to the uncontrolled exacerbation of an emergency or humanitarian situation. This emphasis fails to appreciate the feedback reporting mechanism whose role as outlined in CEWARN structure is to provide better knowledge, initiate analysis and develop response options to a developing conflict. Similarly,

²⁹ Susanne schmeidl, "Conflict Early Warning and Prevention: Toward A Coherent Terminology" in Mwaura Ciru and Schmeidl, Susanne (ed), Early Warning and Conflict Management in The Horn of Africa, (Asmara, The Red sea Press, Inc, 2002) p 77

there is high possibility of the early warning conflicting with the current political priorities or policies of various state and non-state actors. In most cases, this results in the "warning" being completely ignored. This makes early warning potentially a political act with political consequences. Therefore, one should treat the early warning undertaking with care and with an awareness of how the information might be used although taking no action also has potential political consequences.

The assumption that a crisis is the measure against which policy decisions and their aftermath are judged, may contribute to analytical clarity. However, this assumption fails to appreciate the role of environment in decision-making. The environment tends to affect decision-makers' receptivity to warning more than the circumstances causing the alarm even when the warning is very clear. The decision-makers frequently perceive these factors to be more legitimate to consider than circumstances on the ground. In this regard, regional structures of CEWARN provide broader authority for action as it takes the edge off the neighbours' suspicions. CEWARN further enhances and sustains political attention, as the Assembly is the supreme organ in decision-making.³⁰

In spite of this strength, a regional conflict early warning and response mechanism is a creature of states and state structures. Therefore, the mechanism is subject to the vicissitudes of the region's political and geopolitical realities. As Susanne³¹ notes, the fact that the measuring the success

³⁰ Wedgwood Ruth, "Regional and Sub-Regional Organizations in International Conflict Management" in Chester A Crocker and Fen Osler Hampson with Pamela Aall, Managing Global Chaos: Sources of and Responses to International Conflict, (Washington, United State Institute of Peace Press, 1996) pp 276-277

³¹ Schmeidl, Susanne, Mwaura Ciru and Howard Adelman " Conclusion" in Mwaura Ciru and Schmeidl, Susanne (ed), Early Warning and Conflict Management in The Horn of Africa, (Asmara, The Red Sea Press, Inc, 2002) p 214

of early warning is through a non-event (no war) makes it hard enough to find supporters who are willing to justify the allocation of scarce resources. Similarly, the requirement for collaboration within and among states in order to make conflict early warning prevention and management successful especially in a region with a history of wars, difficult inter-state relations and lack of trust compounds the whole problem.

The incremental process under which CEWARN was developed and devolution of responsibilities for early warning conflict prevention to the lowest level from higher levels reinforces the effectiveness of the mechanism. The strong link of CEWARN is build at two levels: one between the CEWARN at the IGAD secretariat and the in-state CEWERUs and another one between state actors and civil society involved in the analytical process. In cases where the in-state CEWERUs are not the ones to respond to a warning issue, CEWARN provides clear links with important decision-makers among the IGAD member states and possibly with the international organizations acting as IGAD partners abroad.³²

Therefore, the effectiveness of conflict early warning mechanism depends on how well information processing and decision-making are structured. To this end, capturing critical information on the development of potential conflict, verifying and analysing information forms the technical component of early warning and early response. The clearly laid down consultation and decision-making processes by CEWARN provides feedback loop for effective operation of an early warning mechanism.

³² Ibid p 218

CHAPTER FIVE

ANALYSIS OF THE ETHIOPIA-ERITREA CONFLICT

Introduction

The study observed that conflict early warning and early response mechanisms impact on the conflict cycle in terms of prevention, management and resolution. The current trend in conflict prevention and management is gravitating towards proactive rather than retroactive approach to conflict. The development of CEWARN mirrors this tendency to devolve the responsibility of resolving conflict to regional and sub-regional organizations.

This chapter analyses critical issues emerging from the study. The study sought to investigate three hypotheses. First, early warning and response on conflict generating factors mitigates and prevents violent conflict. Second, advance information without proper analysis elicits uncoordinated response from the public and international community to successfully stem conflict; and third, appropriate response initiatives depend on the rational decisions based on the correct analysis of conflict. Consequently, this chapter argues a case for enhanced co-operation between sub-regional, regional, and international organizations to enhance the effectiveness of CEWARN in the prevention, management and resolution of conflict.

The general aim of the study was to analyse the role of early warning and response mechanisms in the prevention, management and resolution of conflict. The specific objectives were to assess the effectiveness of early warning and response mechanisms in mitigating conflict, and the significance of early warning and response mechanisms in preventing conflict. The rationale of this chapter is to analyse critically the broader findings of the entire study. It evaluates issues

raised in the study and retrospectively examines how CEWARN would have influenced the management of the Ethiopia-Eritrea conflict.

Critical Issues Emerging In The Study

Chapter Two identified both structural and dynamic causes underlying the Ethiopia-Eritrea conflict. Among the causes noted were ideological differences, border disputes, rights of citizenship, the warning by the Ethiopian parliament on the inevitability of war, and the interplay of leadership styles and internal politics specific to each state. Therefore, the perception or misperception of the intent of each state only heightened the already existing tensions between the two states.¹ The failure to act on these warnings led to the widening of the chasm between Eritrea and Ethiopia. This observation supports the hypothesis that early warning and early response on key generating factors mitigates and prevents violent conflicts. This analysis illustrates the need to integrate monitoring of conflict indicators with proper analysis to inform policy-making and early response on the impending conflict.

Chapter Three examined the theoretical basis of early warning systems. The chapter observed that the effectiveness of early warning and early response mechanisms depend on the integration of warning and opportunities in information collection, analysis and decision-making. It emphasized the need for early warning mechanism to focus on dynamic factors like the intensity of conflict, and structural factors because timely response and other preventive measures depend on such indicators. Early warning and early response is an integral process involving monitoring, gathering and analysis of information. The

¹ See R Jarvis, Perception and Misperception in International Politics (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1976) pp 28-31

international community would have put up a timely response to the Ethiopia-Eritrea conflict had existing conflict indicators been properly analysed and factored into consideration.² This was imperative in creating political will and assessing the capacity of the region to prevent and resolve conflict.

Despite the availability of information on conflict, preventive actions continue to depend on contingency factors, correct measures and timing. This confirms the second hypothesis that advance information alone does not elicit pressure to successfully stem conflict. The availability of information without proper analysis, political will and interest has no impact on conflict prevention. Therefore, an effective preventive early warning mechanism acts as an interface between states and non-state actors in initiating responses to conflict. Based on this argument, it is suggested that had CEWARN existed, it could have prevented the Ethiopia-Eritrea conflict. It could have served as a link between warning and access to high-level decision-makers.³ However, its effectiveness would have depended on policy-making procedures and the speed of reaching hard policy choices. However, procrastination about critical choices negates the rationale of early warning and worsens the co-ordination of intervention between different intervening actors in a conflict. A strategic and timely response to conflict tends to reflect the escalation level and intensity of the conflict. Paradoxically, neither of these actions can be easily restricted before the outbreak of violence because of the tendency to rely on dynamic conflict indicators at the expense of structural indicators that often lead to early warning.

² See Gwexe G Sandie, "Brothers at War: Reflections on an Internecine Conflict Between Ethiopia and Eritrea", Africa Journal of Conflict Resolution, No 1/2001 at www.Accord.org.Za/publications/journals. See also Chapter Two for an incisive analysis of these warning indicators.

³ See IGAD News, A Bi-Monthly Magazine, Published by the IGAD, Issue 1 March-April, 2002

A systematic and practical early warning system requires a combination of consistently updated contingency plans for preventive action that provide decision-makers with a repertoire of responses.⁴ The information overload, a large number of surmounting crises and the ever-growing limitation of resources influence policy-making and preventive responses to any conflict. In assessing whether or not any opportunity existed for preventing the Ethiopia-Eritrea conflict, two questions are important, whether the alternative action was possible during the conflict, and whether all these actions could have only retrospectively been determined.⁵ In the Ethiopia-Eritrea conflict, the diplomatic efforts were only possible with consistent and intensive engagement before the violence erupted. The joint high ministerial Commission of 1995 that was set up to resolve border dispute was overtaken by events and these diplomatic efforts melted in the flame of war.

The interface between early warning and conflict prevention is important in designing a preventive strategy. However, emphasising dynamic factors in disregard of structural issues limits the effectiveness of conflict prevention. This is because structural factors increase the number of potential accelerators. Since conflict prevention strategies depend on the conflict cycle, the degree of escalation and the ripeness of conflict determine the instruments of prevention that are most effective in each phase of the conflict. The interface between early warning and conflict prevention is critical for the actors and in developing case scenarios. However, the realization of success is possible only by integrating both

⁴ For a detailed conflict analysis and response scenarios see www.fewer.org, "Conflict Analysis and Response Definition, Abridged Methodology, April, 2001

⁵ See an article by George Alexander and Jane Holt, "The Warning –Response Problem and Missed Opportunities in Preventive Diplomacy", Discussion Paper, Carnegie Commission on Preventing Deadly Conflict, (Washington DC, Carnegie Corporation of New York, 1997)

early warning and conflict prevention in the broader conflict prevention strategy to encompass long-term development.⁶

Chapter Four analysed the institutional capacities of CEWARN to prevent, manage and resolve conflict in the IGAD sub-region. The issues that emerged from this chapter illustrate the fact that information sharing is still inadequate despite the inclusion of local, national, regional and international actors in information collection. The integration of civil society into the mechanism enhances sourcing of information. However, this arrangement raises a problem of sharing analysed information. CEWARN depends on the good will of member states whose national interests will continue to influence its operations. Since information is the pillar of a conflict early warning system, there is a need for comprehensive information analysis that reflects the level of conflict. The integration of information processing to decision-making structure enhances political will and financial support for the success of conflict prevention strategies. However, no consensus exists on the best analytical framework for describing early warning signals, conflict interventions and standard reporting practices. Since conflict early warning is seen as a pre-condition in developing political will and informs reasonable response strategies then it would have been the *sine qua non* of effective prevention of conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea. The argument raised in this study is that the success of conflict prevention would not have solely rested with CEWARN but in the collaborative efforts of local, national, regional and international actors. The quality and quantity of relevant information and its objective analysis would have generated policy response to violent conflicts.⁷

⁶ www.fewer.org, "Generating The Means to an End: Planning Integrated Response to Early Warning, Second edition, August, 2000 p 4

⁷ See www.undp.vo/publications/sect3_p3.pdf, "Solutions: Ways Forward to Decrease The Gap Between Early Warning and Conflict Prevention"

The importance of information in early warning is realized only when formulated policy options and case scenarios complement each other in initiating responses. The options for intervention depend on whether the intent of early warning is to mitigate conflict or to address its root causes.⁸ Any response needs to balance and integrate short-term actions with long-term visions. This corroborates the third hypothesis that appropriate response initiatives depend on the correct interpretation of early signs of a conflict. However, the proper functioning of early warning mechanism is only possible by developing a partnership with other organizations and actors in order to overcome the problem of resources. With its well-structured information collection network, proper analysis and decision-making process, CEWARN would have proactively generated regional and international responses to the Ethiopia-Eritrea conflict rather than a retroactive response.⁹ The link between those charged with responsibilities of warning and those who are supposed to be warned is very critical in initiating response strategies, since the wider the warning-response gap the less effective the responses might be. Irrespective of early warning clarity, warning provides decision-makers with an opportunity to avert violent conflict. The existence of elaborate decision-making structures of CEWARN and the emphasis on analysis of early warning information would have assisted in developing a rich repertoire of response options to reduce the warning-response gap in the Ethiopia-Eritrea conflict.

Further, Chapter Four noted the challenges facing CEWARN in regard to information collection despite the existence of the Khartoum Declaration, national

⁸ Howard Adelman, "Early Warning and Humanitarian Intervention in Zaire", March-Dec 1996 at www.fewer.org/warning/response/research, March 1999.

⁹ See a detailed discussion on the efforts towards mediation by OAU, USA, Rwanda and IGAD soon after the war broke out in T Negash and K Tronvoll, Brothers at War: Making Sense of The Eritrea-Ethiopian War, (Oxford, James Currey Ltd., 2000). pp 57-72

power politics competition between states and civil society in information collection and authentication of some sensitive information. Whereas the structure of CEWARN in collection and validation of information is not in question in intra-state conflict, it collapses at the inter-state level. This suggests that validating information between Ethiopia and Eritrea would have been extremely difficult. The implicit competition between national intelligence agencies, and non-governmental organizations and intergovernmental organization on the other hand over the authenticity of analysed information continues to threaten the success and validity of international organizations engaged in conflict early warning in the post-Cold War environment. The possibility of the early warning conflicting with the current political policies of various state and international actors might have inhibited the effectiveness of CEWARN. The hegemonic tendencies of Ethiopia in the Horn of Africa, for example, could have been in disharmony with Eritrea's assertion of its identity and the mandates of IGAD and CEWARN on conflict prevention and management. What emerges in this Chapter is that crisis is not the only measure against which policy decisions and their efforts are judged. Consideration should extend to other factors like credibility, other strategy concerns and the nature of international system. CEWARN could have provided broader authority for response action by enhancing and sustaining political attention in regard to the Ethiopia-Eritrea conflict. Although mobilizing a concerted international response before an outbreak of a crisis remains elusive, information on causes of conflict is often plentiful and this information lacks analysis to inform actions and early responses to conflict.¹⁰

¹⁰ Sally Chin, John Davies et al, "Challenges and Lessons Learned in Setting up Early Warning Pilot Projects in the Caucuses and the Great Lakes", (Paper Prepared for The Annual Report of The Conflict Prevention Network of European Union) at www.fewer.org/research

Analysis of the study hypotheses

The study adduced evidence bearing on the stated study hypotheses. The following hypotheses informed this study.

Early warning and response on conflict factors mitigates and prevents violent conflict

The study established that effective early warning and early response depends on the quality of both structural and dynamic factors informing a conflict. To underscore this, the study traced the origin of Eritrea -Ethiopia conflict. The study demonstrated that the roots of Ethiopia-Eritrea conflict are situated in colonial structures that hegemonic Ethiopia exploited on during its control over Eritrea. Further, the ideological differences envisaged by the two main liberation fronts, TPLF and EPLF continued to impact on the relations between independent Eritrea and Ethiopia. All subsequent collaborative arrangements between the two states were based on their common past histories. Despite these glaring warning indicators, the continued failure to remedy the past mistakes and issues like border demarcation, and strict definition of citizenship impacted negatively on the relationship between the two states and heightened the tension. These failures led to a widening chasm between Ethiopia and Eritrea. Furthermore, the interplay of leadership style and internal politics in each state accelerated and sharpened the rough edges of the already existing conflict. Ethiopia's focus on exterminating the rebels holed up in areas inside the territory of Eritrea subsequently raised controversy over the administration of border areas between Eritrea and Ethiopian, thus triggering violence. The crisis only set in

when perception or misperception of each leader's image emerged as evidenced in the exchange of letters between two leaders of these states.¹¹

The clear warning by the Ethiopian parliament on the inevitability of war went unheeded. Subsequent activities and posturing by the two states heightened the conflict and fuelled structural differences between the two states. Despite all these warnings, Eritrea continued to engage Ethiopia in controversial matters of trade oblivious of the repercussions. Had there been a CEWARN, a proper analysis of these conflict indicators might have generated political will and resources (both regionally and internationally) to mitigate conflict at an early stage. The lack of early warning mechanism encouraged the haphazard regional responses to the conflict by IGAD, OAU, Rwanda and USA. Although their attempted responses were commendable, their mediation efforts lacked co-ordination, urgency and at best were reactive rather than proactive. This analysis illuminates the need for integrated monitoring of the indicators of conflict, their proper analysis, and informed policy-making in response to the impending conflict. This is not easy, as the issue of state sovereignty, secrecy of information and power jostling continue to pose a daunting challenge to the whole process of realizing a functional conflict early warning system.

Advance information does not elicit pressure to successfully stem conflict.

The integration of warning and opportunities for response reside in information collection, analysis and decision-making. The existence of information on dynamic factors and the intensity of conflict, and structural factors without consideration of other factors negatively impacts on conflict response. Technology, for instance continues to impact heavily on both conflict and

¹¹ See Chapter Two for details on the exchange of letters between the two leaders.

decision-making structures. Technology has enhanced dynamic factors of conflict and crisis development and simultaneously reduced the rational decision-making procedures to ad hoc. Faced by time factor more often than not only few alternative responses are considered in a rapidly unfolding crisis. Therefore, the analysis of the indicators tends to determine the timing of response and time frame for initiating preventive measures. Consequently, the time frame devised for conflict response reflects both structural and dynamic factors. The quality of conflict prevention and management is a function of early warning information, analyses and scenario building and options. To enhance objectivity, CEWARN embraced the relationship between civil society and interstate organizations in order to complement each other and minimize its weaknesses. The international community would have put up a good response to the Ethiopia-Eritrea conflict based on the recommendations of the Committee of Permanent Secretaries in Article 9 of the Protocols establishing CEWARN. The recommendations would have been guided by conflict warning indicators and analysis of events preceding the war as earlier observed in Chapter Two. This would have been imperative in facilitating mediation and resolution of the conflict. However, the existence of an early warning mechanism alone without consideration of other factors such as political will and existing capacity would not have necessarily led to effective response.

The process of analysing and developing response scenarios is complex. The process requires a clear view on the intended actions, recipient of conflict warning and the extent of tolerance on causes of potential conflict. Most often information processing is subject to bureaucratic procedures, which tend to discard important information. Since the accessibility to information decreases as conflict escalates, there is a likelihood of gathering skewed information. This problem is circumvented in CEWARN by having an established information

network tasked with the regular collection of information and a co-ordination organ to standardize, synthesise and analyse information.¹² Such analysis aims at establishing connections between dynamic factors and structural variables for the better understanding of conflicts and the formulation of preventive strategies. The link between early warning and decision-making reveals that interstate crises usually create a security vacuum that states seek to fill through violence. Any effective early warning action seeking to deter the initiation or escalation of hostilities needs to appreciate the nature of conflict whose causes and dynamics are deep rooted. Therefore, the options for effectively preventing conflict are limited as conflict degenerates into violence. The eruption of violent conflict signals the failure of the effective anticipation of conflict and assessment of interventions.

The practical utility of an early warning system is limited to the political will to take early action. Therefore, the national interest, which is at stake at any particular moment, influences the action to be taken. Similarly, contingency factors have a great impact on preventive actions on a conflict depending on the measures taken and their timing. This observation confirms the hypothesis that advance information without considerations of other factors does not necessarily elicit any response to successfully stem conflict. The availability of information without proper analysis, political will and interest has no impact on conflict prevention. Were CEWARN to nip the potential Ethiopia-Eritrea conflict, quality scenarios would have been developed from available data to generate political will and resources to initiate diplomatic efforts in resolving the conflict.

Based on this argument the existence of CEWARN could have positively helped in the preventing the Ethiopia-Eritrea conflict. However, bureaucracy

¹² See Articles 10 and 12 of The Protocols Establishing CEWARN.

would have hindered the effectiveness of early warning and response and this could have worsened co-ordination of intervention efforts by different actors. A systematic and practical early warning system should be combined with consistently updated contingency plans for preventive action that provides a repertoire of responses. However, there is no consensus on what constitutes a "good" early warning practice for conflict since it draws on multiple sources of information and combines qualitative and quantitative data.¹³ In the event that early warning and early response focuses only on dynamic factors in total disregard of structural issues its effectiveness to prevent conflict would be limited. This is because structural problems increase the number of potential accelerators. Both structural factors and the level of intensity of conflict provide the basis for designing preventive action. The priority of response in the early stages of conflict should begin with the option of diplomacy and building local institutions ("soft preventive measures") to military force ("hard preventive measures") as conflict advances to violence. However, for both early warning and conflict prevention to succeed, it is important to integrate early warning and conflict prevention in the broader strategy of long-term development.

Appropriate response depends on the correct interpretation of early signs of a conflict.

The intent and development of CEWARN was to address the institutional capacities for conflict prevention, management and resolution in the IGAD sub-region. The study observed the importance of having an early warning

¹³ Manuel Leonhardt and David Nyheim, "Promoting Development in Areas of Actual or Potential Violent Conflict: Approaches in Conflict Impact Assessment and Early Warning". (Paper Originally Presented at the Global Development Network Conference Bonn, 5-8 Dec 1999).

mechanism that facilitates information sharing and have a well-coordinated decision-making structure. The CEWARN mechanism derives its strength from having an all-inclusive structure that encompasses local, national and regional level actors. The integration of civil society into the mechanism enhances sourcing of information. However, this arrangement raises a problem of sharing analysed information. CEWARN depends on the good will of member states whose national interests will continue to influence its operation.

The establishment and institutionalisation of CEWARN shows how information is at the heart of conflict early warning systems.¹⁴ Comprehensive analysis based on both quantitative and qualitative data requires regular monitoring of conflict indicators. The need for objective analysis of information requires the input of an independent body. Similar observation is made in regard to prevention and management of conflict which needs a decentralized multi-level regime where different actors play different roles. These arrangements tend to enhance political will and financial support for the success of conflict prevention strategies. However, the mechanism also does not specify the best analytical framework for describing early warning signals and conflict interventions and standard of reporting practices. Because many actors are involved in the collaborative role of gathering and communicating early warning signs, this might reduce an overload on the processing unit thus reducing the possibility of passivity in the CEWARN.

Pertinent to this observation is the argument that the success of conflict prevention would not have solely rested with CEWARN but in collaborative efforts

¹⁴ See Abong'o Chris, "Early Warning and Preventive Diplomacy: The Case for Late Action", (A paper Prepared for Ethiopia Institute for Peace and Development in Partnership with Friedrich Ebert Stiftung during a Conference on "Cooperation, Conflict and Security Issues: Mechanism for Prevention, Management and Resolution" held in Addis Ababa, 12-14, Nov, 2002)

with other actors. This layered response would have resulted in the generation of relevant information, which could have strengthened the capacity to prevent and manage violent conflict. The obvious strength of CEWARN is its reliance on context specific rather than application of universal approaches and standardized forms of response. In linking decision-making to early response to conflict, information is critical in early warning if only policy formulation options and case scenarios for response complement each other. Imperative to the success of a conflict early warning is the harmonization of structural and operative preventive strategies. This realization suggests that the main obstacle to effecting conflict prevention strategies is the financial resource. With a well-structured information collection, network and proper analysis, CEWARN would have generated regional and international response to the Ethiopia-Eritrea conflict by highlighting conflict warning and suggesting possible response options to those required to act.

The warning-response gap reflects a link between those charged with warning and those warned. This is very critical in initiating response strategies, since the wider the gap, the less effective the responses. The effectiveness of CEWARN rests in facilitating CEWERUs and response actors by ensuring the collection and analysis of information, and dissemination to stakeholders. The decision-making structure of CEWARN provides more sustained and inclusive consultations from local, national, regional and even civil society. In this respect, developing response options reduces the warning-response gap. The structure of CEWARN is clearly laid down by Article 4 and this reduces the warning-response gap. The structure includes: the policy arm, the administrative arm, the technical, the cooperating arm and the coordinating arm. These structures notwithstanding, sometimes decision-makers' interpretation of the past influences how they interpret the future. In the same vein, the human and financial implications of the

continuous acquisition of exhaustive information tend to limit decision-making. This limitation denies decision-makers perfect information leaving them with a collection of selected data. This is because environmental factors structure the nature of decision, the options available, the consequences, costs and benefits of these options. Therefore, response to any conflict is subject to both opportunity and willingness. The dominant approach to prevention of violence seeks to correlate different instruments of prevention with various phases of the conflict cycle. The success of early warning mechanism hinges on the multiplicity of actors. The collaboration envisaged between CEWARN and other organizations portends good for the realization of effective prevention of conflict.¹⁵

The persistence of imprecise warning indicators continues to generate uncertainty and diverse interpretations. There is a need for the development of better theories and models to properly assess, evaluate indicators, analyse and interpret early warning indicators. The problem is not the availability or unavailability of timely and accurate warning but how to reduce “warning-response gap” which makes conflict preventive actions difficult.

This study reached the following three conclusions. First, there were warning indicators on Ethiopia-Eritrea conflict and had there been an early warning and early response mechanism these indicators would have been properly analysed to generate both political will and resources for timely and co-ordinated response. Second, success or failure to respond to conflict on time is a factor of technical, institutional and response aspect of early warning. Lastly, the link of information network to decision-making structure reduces the warning-response gap and enhances the success of CEWARN in conflict prevention.

¹⁵ See Article 3 on The Legal Foundation of CEWARN.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION

Introduction

This study explored the role of early warning and early response mechanism in conflict prevention, management and resolution. In this process the main literature on conflict prevention and early warning was critically examined. The literature review revealed the need for both theoretical and practical efforts in identifying various causes or signs of conflict in advance and attempt to situate the right conflict preventive strategies. The literature pegged early warning on conflict cycle without necessarily differentiating between early and late warning. Therefore, the study set out to fill this gap by examining structural and dynamic causes of conflict that would have necessitated for early warning and early response. Further, the literature exclusively espoused on an ideal conflict early warning system without necessarily applying to a particular conflict. By embracing early warning system as an integral aspect of conflict prevention and management has some practical relevancy in the 21st century. Therefore, this study set out to contribute knowledge in interstate conflict early warning and fill the void at the sub-regional level. The importance of an early warning mechanism was applied to a specific case, the Ethiopia-Eritrea conflict. The broader finding of the study is that early warning and early response to conflict is an integrated process that requires quality information and analysis, proper timing, resource mobilization and political will.

A Retrospective Appraisal of CEWARN

This study was based on one broad objective and other specific objectives. The broad objective of the study was to analyse the role of early warning and response mechanisms in the management of conflict. In order to realize the objectives, the study was organized around six chapters. Chapter One laid the background to the study. It set out the objectives, hypotheses, conceptual framework and reviewed relevant literature on this study. Basically this chapter traced the origin and development of early warning as an instrument of conflict prevention. Chapter Two set the specific case on which a retrospective analysis of the working of the early warning mechanism was based. The intent of this chapter was to capture what were the early warning indicators of the Ethiopia-Eritrea conflict. Chapter Three explored the types and conceptual discourses on early warning and conflict prevention and, laid ground for the analysis of the IGAD early warning mechanism. Further, Chapter Three detailed the role of early warning and early response mechanism. Basically it was highlighted how early warning is a political process designed to pinpoint appropriate approaches to conflict prevention through development, diplomacy and political preventive strategies. Chapter Four critically examined the structure and operation of CEWARN. Chapter Five critically analysed Ethiopia-Eritrea conflict in respect to how CEWARN would have influenced its prevention and management.

The study noted that the policy relevance of early warning stems from analysing a conflict, assessing the capacity needs and responses for dealing with a conflict. Had CEWARN been established then identification of potential conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea would have created the necessary political will for preventive action. The early warning and early response

mechanism would have aided in the preparation and response to the conflict. The mechanism would have provided an opportunity to avert the expected conflict, modify it or redirect it into some less dangerous and less costly direction.

The significance of early warning mechanism would have been to reduce the vulnerability of those affected, shorten the response time and signal to the parties a strong and credible commitment to respond diplomatically or militarily. Further, early warning could have been used to gather more information about the conflict, engage the parties in a sustained dialogue, design measures to reduce the potential costs and conduct consultations with key states and allies. Further, it could have informed the public on the conflict and anticipated the political and psychological pressures that were likely to be brought to bear on policy matters in the event of a crisis, reviewed, updated and rehearsed existing contingency plans or initiated formal negotiations or mediation, fact-finding missions or extended "good offices" to the warring parties.

By exploring structural and dynamic factors in the Ethiopia-Eritrea conflict, the study linked early warning with conflict prevention. It noted that the severity of structural problems increases the number of potential accelerators of conflict. This makes the determination of which events warrant early warning of a conflict extremely difficult. This is because early warning and action triggered only by the dynamic causes of violence are oriented to crisis reaction rather than conflict prevention. The threshold of a conflict determines whether or not it leads to the irreversibility of protracted warfare. Therefore, effective conflict prevention should be dynamic, progressively targeting the root and dynamic causes of conflict. In this regard, preventive action depends mainly on the realistic response alternatives. Both the background conditions and

accelerators define the propensity and intensity of the conflict and provide the basis for designing response.

The study emphasized the need for continued monitoring and reporting of early warning indicators for the effective prevention of conflict. While preventive action cuts across the entire conflict spectrum, it comprises three successive but separate approaches, conflict prevention, management and resolution. Today the dominant approach to violence prevention is to create different instruments of response in the various phases of the conflict cycle.¹ Thus, the degree of escalation and the ripeness of conflict determine which instruments of prevention are most effective in each phase of the conflict. Early warning and conflict prevention serve a complementary role. An adequate and reliable knowledge on the background, context and dynamics of the conflict are important in determining response. A successful early warning system needs to give third party interveners the opportunity to put preventive measures into place and allow parties time to identify conflict issues and move towards solutions. However, the uncertainty of timing and defining conflict remains critical factor in the prevention of conflict.

The early warning deals with collection of specific indicators, analysis of information, formulation of best or worst case scenarios and response options and communication to decision-makers. Thus, the success or failure of early warning mechanism is a function of many interrelated factors. These are information collection and analysis, communication channels and decision-making processes and response options. The failure at the response

¹ See N, Laurie, "The Four Horsemen of The Apocalypse: The Structural Causes of Crisis and Violence in Africa", Peace and Change, April 2000, Vol 25 Issue 2

side of conflict prevention results from technical, institutional constraints, situational and political conditions. The analysis component of early warning that develops case scenarios and policy options actually decreases the warning-response gap, and increases the political will. Improving the analytical capacity that flows into these components of early warning is at least as central as trying to correctly anticipate escalation of violent conflict. Similarly, the failure to prevent Ethiopia-Eritrea conflict in spite of conspicuous early warnings was due to a number of factors. These were the lack of analysis of information, impaired perception and failure to take the worst possible scenarios into account, lack of communication channels, lack of coordinated response, inadequate response strategies, late prevention, and lack of regional collaboration among the major intervening actors.

Opportunities and Challenges of CEWARN

The move from retroactive management of conflict as exemplified by mediations efforts in the Ethiopia-Eritrea conflict to a proactive management of conflict resuscitates hope of averting future humanitarian crisis. Although the existence of a conflict warning mechanism ensures continuous monitoring, prevention and management of violent conflict, conflict is endemic and expectation of total elimination of violence in anarchic international system is unrealistic.

The effectiveness of CEWARN can only be realized in its application to conflict cycle and in the structuring of decision-making organs in the whole mechanism. While identification of indicators might be easy, emphasis should be laid on structural factors as they form the background of the causes of

conflict. Whereas this exercise is obvious, it might overlook a critical issue of timing in regard to sounding the warning of an impending conflict.

Although the models of early warning are distinct, existing mechanisms do not strictly fit in one model alone. The effectiveness of the mechanism is determined by how well it sifts information overload and make decisions. Contrary to the expectation of CEWARN on unreserved right on the verification of information, verification of intra-state conflict indicators is easier than interstate conflict indicators. This is because the anarchical nature of the international system unlike individual states lacks the salient feature of centralized power hence the system is subject to intrigues and sensitivities of powerful states in their struggle to protect their national interests. Might the hegemonic struggle between Kenya and Ethiopia to dominate the IGAD sub-region affect the smooth operation of CEWAREN in future?

Many interstate organizations engaged in conflict management like IGAD did not emphasis early warning and early response in their mandates. Since both IGAD and CEWARN are creatures of state structures then the past failures that resulted from political manoeuvres and projection of individual national interests would continue to rear its head. This wary suggests why the mechanism sought to incorporate the political structures in CEWARN to ameliorate the functioning and enhance political will in initiating early response to conflict. The incorporation of these structures notwithstanding, would CEWARN escape the intrigues and manoeuvres from member states of IGAD?

CEWARN being a creature of state structures, it would continue to be affected by political and geographical realities to alter its course or focus on conflict prevention. With the existing uneasy relations and lack of trusts between member states, what are the chances for the success? Since

structural factors or indicators of conflict have a common strand in all conflicts, this would not be an exception in the future. By emphasizing on responses to reflect the escalation level and intensity of the on going conflicts, the mechanism might overlook at the vital structural factors in the on going conflicts in member states like Somalia and Sudan.

By merely facilitating the collection of information, analysis and dissemination of information, CEWARN would likely be only a spectator in conflict prevention. In sharing information with political stakeholders, CEWARN remains at the mercy of respondents' whims and dictates of respective organizations interested in a particular conflict. Does mere sharing of information therefore enhance early response? The existing link of CEWARN to decision-making body (The Assembly) seems to reduce the warning-response gap. Conceivable as it may, the reality is that the CEWARN structures of decision-making tend to reinforce bureaucracy by laying down a number of departments or organs and several red tape channels of communication. These structures procrastinate policy decisions thus leading to late response to conflict.

The requirement by CEWARN that the Committee on early warning needs to approve the information users might create obstacles to the smooth flow of information. The strength of CEWARN is in its calibrated-warning response. This tends to forestall uncertainty of warning by initiating appropriate type of warning at an appropriate level. The possibilities of having exhaustive information by CEWARN before initiating response to any conflict might ignore new emerging information threat and therefore lead to late response. It is impossible for all organizations to operate on perfect information when making decisions.

The institutional mindset of CEWARN encourages reliance on standard operating procedures and deference to precedent rather than the exploration of new options to meet new challenges. Although success or failure of CEWARN is heavily weighted to the technical, institutional, communication channels and decision-making structures, availability of resources and its justification for use before violent conflict receives less attention. No wonder the emphasis is laid on collaboration with other organizations in the Protocol establishing CEWARN. Paradoxically, minimizing the mechanism's weakness through collaboration might induce dependency, which is likely to lead to failure in engaging in early response to conflicts.

Conclusion

The establishment of the mechanism of early warning and early response in IGAD realizes the effort of enhancing sub-regional organizations in proactively preventing conflict. The development of an early warning and early response mechanism resuscitates hope of Africans in resolving their myriad endemic conflicts.

Having an early warning and early response mechanism is only a stopgap measure, there is need to have a comprehensive conflict prevention strategy in the region that encompass long-term development. Nevertheless, by having a conflict early warning mechanism that involves diverse actors, have a clearly established channels of communication, continuous monitoring and established decision-making portends good for effective conflict prevention in the sub-region.

Areas for Further Research

The study makes three recommendations in terms of areas that require further research. Although the study accomplished its set goals, the following existing gaps need further investigation to solidify and concretise conflict early warning and early response. First, the study demonstrated that early warning has tended to focus on conflict indicators while an analytical approach to peace remains elusive. Since early warning and early response is an integrated process, continuous studies on general indicators in the region would either help in supporting existing peace initiatives or mitigate conflict through conflict preventive strategies respectively. Second, there is need to standardize the indicators to reflect policy relevance and correlate information sources. Different organizations involved in information collection have different mandates and policies. These differences in background make actors to put different emphasis on indicators to be collected. There is inadequacy in understanding the perceptual nature of indicators used for analysis. Third, further research is similarly needed in analysing the process and effect of decision-making on initiating early warning responses. This would probably shade light on the discordance in cases where there exist clear early warnings yet there is failure in initiating early responses to conflict.

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