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*Early Warning of Disastrous Population Movement*¹

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This article undertakes to analyze existing and potential early warning facilities in man-made disasters which induce forced movement of people. It sets out some possible forms of early warning and the organizational options connected with them. It concludes that a mixed form of organization, combining some existing facilities and some modest new organization, could provide early warning, although this function would operate in a difficult and delicate political atmosphere that cannot be avoided.

Whole populations can be driven into flight by disasters created by man. These disasters may have short-term, immediately perceptible effects or, they may take their toll over considerable time periods, eventually combining with natural forces, such as insufficient rainfall. Governments and other social groupings have the capacities in much of the world to create, at will, either the short-term or long-term disastrous conditions from which people will flee. Man-made disasters also result from malevolent non-performance in a society. The victims may move as individuals, small or large groups or in huge waves of people. However much their movements are aimed at protecting themselves, their displacement affects other parts of their own national population, other social groups and relations among governments at the international level.

Host governments and other social organizations may react by trying to cope effectively with the impact of such flows of people on themselves, while relieving the misery of those most touched by a man-made disaster. As such, timely information about the chain of events and the related human dimensions is indispensable for an optimal response. Such notice comprises what is usually understood as "early warning".²

¹ This article is based on a study prepared for the Independent Commission on International Humanitarian issues. The author is grateful for its support and permission to publish the article here.

² This term has multiple meanings and apparently military origin. It seems to have developed during the Second World War and since then was related in military parlance to securing information permitting the launching of a nuclear attack in time to make an effective, i.e., destructive, response. It has also been used in connection with the control of damaging drugs, undesirable hu-

THE NATURE OF EARLY WARNING

Early warning consists entirely of data and data projections, concerning defined people in specific places at given times and concentrates on activities that will have disastrous consequences for the people involved. Such consequences may be expressed in the belief, actual or anticipated, on the part of the affected people that they cannot further sustain their lives in the specific territory where they are located. Or it can be expressed in the opinion by qualified experts that a disastrous situation, caused by human actions, is developing. Or, it can include reports on the impact of an actual man-made disaster. Although, theoretically, early warning could be given for the disastrous effects on a few individuals, usually it would relate to groups of people.

This concept of early warning excludes the distribution of material goods or other assistance. It does not recommend to governments or other organizations particular policies to be followed in reaction to disaster. Nor does it set out minima for survival or other standards of treatment. It does assume, however, that inhumane treatment of a given population will lead to a reaction in the form of departure considered as forced by those in flight or by qualified observers. Early warning therefore concerns movements of people subjected to severe deprivations and threats that they could not avoid and did not themselves cause.

Basically, early warning includes information that could be used by various organizations, whether state or voluntary, as a basis for framing policies and programs for the benefit of people afflicted by a man-made disaster. An early warning in a man-made disaster would be directed towards agencies that have the responsibility and capacity to act in such circumstances. Thus, early warning is impartial but not neutral with regard to the displaced victims of man-made disasters.

The general concept of early warning needs additional refinement if it is to fit the great variety of possible responses to specific situations that comprise humanitarian need as a common element. Moreover, the concept requires the assumption that information in quantity and quality to make a sound evaluation will be available and that skillful judgments will be made by expert personnel. Neither of these assumptions can be sustained without more inquiry.

USING EARLY WARNING

Early warning can be directed toward two principle types of situations. In the first of these, no significant outflow of people has yet occurred but is

man behavior, and in the United Nations Food Conference of 1974, in relation to food security. It has recently been used in discussions of refugees.

likely to take place either soon or at some more distant future time. In this circumstance, prevention or containment of the disaster itself is still possible. In the second kind of situation, the disaster already has been set in motion or is in full progress. Prevention is no longer possible, although amelioration may be. In this circumstance, early warning would necessarily be directed to the relief and protection of people who already suffer from a disaster.

Prevention

Preventing a man-made disaster that entails forced migration demands political action, that is, authoritative social decisions. That demand is a necessary consequence of the fact that governments have the ultimate responsibility for the actions, or failures to act, that cause man-made disasters. The persecutions that cause the flow of refugees, narrowly defined in the United Nations Convention of Refugees,³ result from what governments do or fail to do. The United Nations General Assembly has, on some occasions, asked the UN High Commissioner for Refugees to supervise humanitarian relief for people in refugee-like situations, such as displacement in their own country during an international conflict.⁴ Early warning intended to call forth action to prevent such situations has an equally political coloration, however much its aim is humanitarian.

Much recent comment on forced migration employs international standards of human rights as a yardstick. Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan⁵ and others attribute forced migrations generally, as well as narrower movements of political refugees, to the denial by social authorities of human rights to whole populations or specific groups. Denial of human rights can have a massive or selective quality. It can represent a reduction of rights formerly enjoyed. It can involve personal freedoms and protection against the arbitrary use of authority by governments or it can include rights to basic needs and welfare in economic and social realms. It can also stem from long-term incompetence or non-performance on the part of governments. It can include deliberate malevolence on the part of the social authorities as well as

³ 189 United Nations Treaty Series 150.

⁴ The High Commissioner undertook activities on behalf of displaced persons in Cyprus, for example. The General Assembly endorses such programs formally by approving the exercise of good offices by UNHCR, as in UN General Assembly Resolution 32/67 of 8 Dec. 1977, where the High Commissioner is requested "...continue to provide humanitarian assistance to refugees and displaced persons of concern to his Office, including those in urgent need of help in Africa, Asia and Latin America". While that may not seem to omit much, it endorses his going beyond formal, narrow definitions of refugees in some cases. For a brief discussion of the expansion of legal definition, see Guy S. Goodwin-Gill, *The Refugee in International Law* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1983), pp. 6-13.

⁵ In U.N. Doc. E/CN.4/1503, *Study on Human Rights and Mass Exoduses*, a report requested by the UN Commission on Human Rights, Res. 28 (xxxvii), 11 March 1981. Three case studies attached to the main text were withdrawn after they proved objectionable to the governments named in them. These were later published in *Transnational Perspectives* (1982).

blundering decisions.⁶ Such denial of human rights clearly is the stuff both of national, political and man-made disaster. Because, at least in principle, the denial of human rights can be charted, it provides a basis for early warning. Moreover, because a large number of governments have either adhered to the UN Conventions on Human Rights,⁷ or claim to accept the validity of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights, the standard, it may be assumed, is familiar to much of the world. In addition, regional organizations in Europe, Latin America and Africa have added specific provisions to the broader universal standards.⁸ The utility of human rights standards in early warning, however, does not somehow change the fact that man-made disasters reflect political activities. It does provide a means for judging the outcome of a class of such activities.

War and domestic insurrection can also be comprehended in man-made disasters to which the human rights standard applies. Fighting denies basic human rights, such as that to life, to livelihood, to safety and to physical health to those innocently involved. It causes forced migrations. The acceptance given the Geneva Conventions,⁹ which seek the protection of civilian victims of war, underlines the point that armed conflict violates recognized standards of human rights. Yet even if armed conflict were excluded from early warning, the international standard of human rights could serve as a solid basis for estimating growing or impending danger.

Most early warning of man-made disaster entailing migration probably will concern proximate causes rather than long-term factors. It is both easier and more credible to make short-term social forecasts. Nevertheless, indications of an approaching man-made disaster could perhaps be assembled at a very early stage.¹⁰ Such early warnings probably would project disastrous

⁶ In the international human rights framework, states undertake responsibilities towards humans; they are thus responsible for derogation of rights they undertake to guarantee. See, comment in Goodwin-Gill, *op. cit.*, pp. 137-139.

⁷ As of the end of 1984, the Convention on Civil and Political Rights had 78 adherents.

⁸ For example, OAU Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa (1969), 14 United Nations Treaty Series 691; and OAS Convention on Territorial Asylum and OAS Convention on Diplomatic Asylum (1954), OAS Official Records, OEA, Ser. X/1. Treaty Series 34.

⁹ Geneva Convention Relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War of August 12, 1949 in *International Red Cross Handbook* (Geneva, International Committee of the Red Cross, 1971) and *Protocols Additional to the Geneva Convention 12 August 1949* (Geneva, International Committee of the Red Cross, 1977, especially Part IV. The earlier document has been accepted by most states, the parts of the latter by 40 or more.

¹⁰ There is no shortage of attempts to predict the social, military and ecological future, ranging from elaborate quantitative efforts, like the first Club of Rome report, through sober governmental papers like the US Government Report, *Global 2000*. Dennis L. and Donella H. Meadows, *et al.*, *The Limits to Growth: a Report for the Club of Rome's Project on the Predicament of Mankind* (New York, Universe Books, 1972) and United States Council on Environmental Quality and U.S. Department of State, *The Global 2000 Report to the President: Entering the Twenty First Century* (Washington, Government Printing office, 1980). The more variables that are included in such studies and the

conditions in the future if current activities were continued. Included could be such factors as changes of government that establish new elites that aim at depriving a population of part or all of its significant rights or that erect social systems based on obvious injustices; the use of minorities as scapegoats; and social division that encourages repression of minorities. Beyond such social and political factors of visible impact, estimates of deeper factors also could be attempted. In some societies, social practices, including the rapid growth of population, put enormous pressure on the natural environment. Forests and land are depleted at a rapid rate. Once fertile areas become progressively dessicated. Urban growth proceeds at a breath-taking rate. The government gives no or little sign of recognizing the likely outcome with regard to the human rights of the population and can look forward increasingly to unmanageable situations that will encourage yet more migration under increasingly disorderly circumstances. Such background factors could be projected in such a way as to lead to a warning about a whole geographical region rather than a single polity. The assumption of such a warning would be that governmental failures and lack of initiatives will produce a disaster that could be prevented or contained in part of an affected region.

Relief

Although early warning could initiate efforts to prevent a forced stream of unwilling migrants, the possibility that it could be used to increase the efficiency of efforts to cope with the new presence probably has attracted more attention to the concept.¹¹ This emphasis follows from the reality that social organizations of some sort, whether part of the state apparatus or private, must be engaged to feed, shelter and care for migrants, especially when they appear in large numbers under distressed conditions. With their strong political overtones, preventative efforts by nature engage governmental organizations, but these bodies also take part in relief work. The character of their participation varies with situations and their normal organizational tasks. Thus the waves of hungry people that from time to time come to the attention of mass publics almost always engage the United Nations, while refugees resulting from persecution come into the work plans

more assumptions of *ceteris paribus*, the less likely they are to stand the test of actuality. Yet it might be worthwhile to put together a predictive model aimed at the dependent variable of forced migration. In this connection, See the economic argument in Norman Carruthers and Aidan R. Vining, "International Migration: an Application of the Urban Location Model, *World Politics*, XXXV, 1 (October 1982), pp. 106-120.

¹¹ That is the conclusion drawn from a discussion with U.S. Government, international officials and specialists and scholars sponsored by the Refugee Policy Group on #####RPG Editor, please fill in date##### in Washington.

of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees.¹² Voluntary groups that help with relief for injured humanity for the most part hope to avoid involvement in overtly political¹³ affairs, but they are almost always represented in relief efforts stemming from man-made disasters, either as a result of their own initiatives or because their help has been engaged by governmental or intergovernmental organizations.

Early warning of the need for relief efforts would provide an informational basis for more systematic, prior planning for the extension of relief to people forced into movement. It would extend the available time for setting out programs and mounting them. Supplies could be assembled where necessary and personnel summoned for the tasks ahead. Information from earlier experiences with analogous relief efforts, when available, could be consulted by responsible officials. Policy and executive decisions could be prepared and some of them made in advance. By reducing the time gap between the appearance of migrants and the response in the form of delivered services, human misery would be reduced. In general, the early warning would offer a chance to improve the efficiency of the response to the disaster. Supplies and shelter facilities could be arranged more accurately to fit anticipated needs, which themselves could be better estimated than is the case without early warning. The necessary links between the help-providing organizations, whether entirely domestic or partly transnational could, be built up in conditions short of utter emergency.¹⁴

An efficient response would require accurate information both on the character of those on the move and on the precise causes. If, for example, governmental incompetence or malevolence caused mass starvation, the people affected would have needs for supplementary feeding and attention to women and children that differ from those of refugees from short, sharp communal violence. Furthermore, the direction of movement would also

¹² Engagement of the United Nations may be limited to informational statements and speeches by governmental representatives or may burgeon and even reach such a great dimension as the relief program in Bangladesh. On the latter, See, Thomas W. Oliver, *The United Nations in Bangladesh*, (Princeton, NJ, Princeton University Press, 1978). Not all disasters receive responses in terms of relief or diplomacy. Similarly UNHCR does not automatically respond with a program for all incidents. Most generally, organizations tend to react in ways to which their functionaries have become accustomed and for which they have explicit mandates.

¹³ "Political" hardly refers to fixed quantities or agreed classes of events. Voluntary groups and UNHCR emphasize their humanitarian goals. The U.N. General Assembly, which ought to know politics when it sees it, compliments UNHCR regularly for its "humanitarian" approach. In these circumstances, "political" appears to mean highly controversial and likely to provoke explicit denunciation by a government.

¹⁴ UNHCR now tells its staff that "[t]he majority of UNHCR's programs begin as a result of an emergency: a sudden influx of refugees". *Handbook for Emergencies* (Geneva, UN High Commissioner for Refugees, 1982), p. 2. The very preparation of the *Handbook* reflects a need for something more than a reactive stance. Once an emergency has started, responding then could be fatally late, as the starvation in Ethiopia in late 1984 showed.

form an important part of the early warning, for that would help alert the organizations most likely to have contact with the distressed people. It seems likely that early warning of this sort might be issued while forced migrants still were within the borders of their state of origin.

Early warning aimed especially at the efficiency of relief effort connects with a vast repertory of organizational forms, experiences and skills. Unlike the preventive mode of reaction, relief efforts can be managed by a variety of institutions, both private and governmental. They range from global bodies, such as the League of Red Cross Societies and the U.N. Children's Fund, to obscure voluntary groups called into action by the feelings of local church members reacting to television reports. Their financial resources may be strained by large-scale operations, but at least some of them have exhibited much ingenuity in raising funds and furnishing personnel for earlier emergencies.¹⁵

As with preventive early warnings, however, governments of the territories from which forced migrations emanate may understand early warning as contemptuous and interfering.¹⁶ This may be especially true when displaced persons have not left their own country or when a considerable number of them receive assistance. The complaint of such a government will almost certainly deny the humanitarian intent of early warning. Such a government, and perhaps others as well may also fear that widely remarked early warning or even preparations to receive migrants, could intensify a tendency to flee by appearing to offer assurance of comfortable asylum.

ORGANIZING FOR EARLY WARNING

For early warning reliability to have a persuasive effect, it must conform to certain standards. These standards also help to suggest possible organizational forms for producing early warning.

Early warning must be based on authentic information. The more precise the information, the better. It should ideally be specific with regard to time and place, to numbers and to directions of movement. It need not be information formally accepted as true or undisputed by one or several

¹⁵ In December 1984, for example, a television campaign in the Netherlands gathered in contributions for relief of hunger in Africa of more than Dfl. 70 million in one day, including a governmental contribution that was only a fraction of the total. This financing will be doled out among non-governmental and intergovernmental organizations for specific programs. See also, Aaron Levenstein, *Escape to Freedom: the Story of the International Rescue Committee* (Westport, CT, Greenwood Press, 1983) for a description of the operations of a veteran voluntary agency that, from an American base, executes programs to benefit forced migrants. It gives scant evidence, incidentally, of early preparation for any flow of people.

¹⁶ For an account of the reactions from Cambodia to outside perceptions of man-made disaster for which relief would be needed, See, William Shawcross, *The Quality of Mercy* (New York, Simon and Schuster, 1984), Chapter 5.

governments, but it may derive from governmental, as well as non-governmental, sources. If the information is authentic, the source need not necessarily be indicated, but its authenticity is heightened by direct attribution of source. Photographs and films add versimilitude to verbal information.

Recently-developed technical methods offer a quantity and quality of information on disastrous situations that has never before been available or perhaps even made the subject of dreams. Earth satellites can give constant photographs and a flow of raw data. Linked to telecommunications on the ground and computer networks, this information can be coordinated to a richness that it once took months to approach, let alone reach.¹⁷ As data, it is beyond dispute, although it may still fail to provide an entirely reliable or comprehensive basis for estimates of needs. It may need supplementary evidence or assessment from field personnel. The new technology spins out of both public and private laboratories and its use probably already taxes the understanding of inattentive officials. In short, the collection of information makes quantum leaps forward. Its use in early warning of forced population movements has not yet matched the pace of its development. Even when its initial price is high, the new technology bids fails to save lives and to increase the efficiency of organizing to cope with disaster. It also forms a basis for additional technical adaptation of reporting and warning mechanisms.

Information, nevertheless, does not speak for itself. Nor is it usually comprehensive when it has to do with people who have not yet left their own societies. It needs interpretation. Gaps require filling in with expert estimates.

Interpreted information differs from linear projection. To make forecasts about future events requires sensitive insight and experience as well as knowledge of the techniques of social science. Such forecasts will necessarily have a tentative quality. Yet early warnings are intended to stimulate appropriate action from concerned organizations. Therefore initially the plausibility of the warnings and the standing of the forecasters as serious authorities on their subject will influence acceptance. If the forecasts are accurate and acceptable enough to lead to anticipated, beneficial results, subsequent warnings will be greeted with respect.

Early warnings must be impartial with regard to causal factors, including governmental policies. They must be based on clear assumptions. Estimates must be reasoned and defensible as well as insightful. They must be connected to humanitarian goals, even if political steps or economic and financial costs would be needed to reach such goals. Early warnings must issue from sources that cannot be presumed to be doing the work of political movements. They must be appropriate for use by consumers to which they are issued. They should be connected with other early warning systems related to social

¹⁷ For brief account of potentials, See, "Satellites to the Rescue of the Starving", *The Economist*, 293, 7367 (November 10, 1984), pp. 99-100.

developments, such as improved food information systems. Early warning facilities should be kept at state-of-the-art levels with regard to the gathering and processing of information.

Existing Capacity

A real, but rather unfocused, capacity for developing and issuing early warnings of forced movements of people as the result of inhumane pressure now exists. It has had substantial use in the past, but its engagement remains unreliable and unpredictable.

Some of the existing capacity for early warning can be found in intergovernmental organizations, among member governments. Voluntary organizations concerned with refugees and displaced persons, with disaster relief and with development provide another source of early warning; some of their information derives from governments and some of it becomes available to governments and thereby to intergovernmental bodies. Academic research provides another source of information and sometimes of early warning at a fundamental stage. On some occasions, mass media have relayed early warnings and even have helped to originate them.¹⁸

Intergovernmental organizations have increasingly moved towards early warning functions in their fields of actions. These functions do not necessarily constitute a reliable system of warning; nor is the output clearly directed to humanitarian ends. The United Nations system for dealing with matters of international peace and security has the theoretical power and some real capacity to warn of impending conflict through discussions and resolutions of the General Assembly;¹⁹ through more narrowly defined treatment of "situations" in the Security Council;²⁰ and through the power of the Secretary-General to call threats to or breaches of the peace to the attention of the Security Council.²¹ Regional organizations for international security have

¹⁸ For example, See, Barry Wain, *The Refused: The Agony of the Indochina Refugees* (New York, Simon and Schuster, 1981), p. 5-9, and Shawcross, *op. cit.*, Chapter 3.

¹⁹ The most likely appearance of a warning of man-made disaster in the General Assembly is during a speech by a delegate. These speeches generally are regarded as suspect or worthless by the mass media and by the diplomats of some countries, but they nevertheless may make important points. Resolutions usually come at a later stage. Those on South Africa, repeatedly ritualistically each year, do, however, warn of the possibility of large scale human damage. The General Assembly has also repeatedly called for more attention to the problem of refugees in Africa. Its resolutions mentioned this issue as long ago as 1967. See, U.N. General Assembly Res. 2294 (XXII), 11 Dec. 1967. These resolutions usually reflect the opinion of senior UNHCR officials.

²⁰ On the basis of the history of the Security Council, this is primarily a theoretical possibility. But its treatment of *apartheid* in South Africa comes close to the notion that it is warning of an impending disaster.

²¹ Article 99, United Nations Charter. While this article has to do with peace and security, so do some forced migrations. Moreover, the Secretary-General has a legal basis for initiatives, even in sensitive matters, in this article.

analogous functions. As international conflict represents a man-made disaster to its innocent victims, this system may function to provide early warning.

The supervision and promotion by intergovernmental organizations of the protection of human rights also results in the assembly of information that functions as an early warning of massive violations.²² As these can lead to forced migration, they have special relevance to early warning. Moreover, such intergovernmental organizations work under constant surveillance by a set of voluntary agencies that have special interest in human rights. These include such groups as Amnesty International, the International Committee of Jurists and many others. Closely allied to this work on human rights is the International Committee of the Red Cross, which supervises the execution of the Geneva Conventions. Legally a voluntary organization, the ICRC functions on behalf of a wide system of international cooperation. It sometimes explicitly warns of the effects of violations of the Geneva Conventions. Such a statement could have special relevance to forced migrations.

The specialized function of the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees provides information which sometimes is made available for early warning. Usually UNHCR does not issue highly public warnings on its own authority, but its quasi-diplomatic contacts with member governments allow it to perform this function in some cases. This activity is rarely reported fully and the extent of its use as an early warning mechanism therefore remains doubtful. It appears that UNHCR attempts early warning when its officials believe that it is likely that it will become directly involved in protection or assistance to refugees. Most of its warnings therefore would implicitly emphasize proximate remedies rather than longer-term prevention.²³

Other intergovernmental early warning systems have to do with rather specialized issues. The World Health Organization operates an epidemiological warning system to prevent the spread of plague and other diseases by ship traffic. The U.N. Environmental Program maintains a watch over the world environment. The U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization proposes to strengthen a rudimentary early warning system. The organizations to cope with desert locust invasions in northeast Africa rely on forecasting and prepare early warnings. The International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development and the European Community have the capacities to make economic and financial forecasts of various time frames. These sometimes constitute important early warnings of impending events that could be related to man-made disasters

²² See, David P. Forsythe, *Human Rights and World Politics* (Lincoln, Neb., University of Nebraska Press, 1984) for an appreciation of efforts to extend human rights.

²³ "UNHCR evaluation reports...are limited to internal circulation..." *Handbook for Emergencies*, *op cit*, p. v. Shawcross, *op cit*, pp. 83-94, reports confidential conversations between UNHCR officials, the Thai government and others.

either as causal elements or results. In this sense, a substantial amount of data already can be consulted.

Although some activity by voluntary organizations comes into sight through the normal programs of intergovernmental organizations, other aspects remain restricted to the private sector or to the domestic realm. Nevertheless, such organizations often assemble a great deal of authentic information in the course of their normal operations. They deal with the victims of disasters of various stripes and where it is permitted are busy with efforts to shape national policy as well as their own. Their position, close to the basic elements of society, often leads them to an important understanding of developments around them that have not yet been widely known or understood. Some of these organizations have specialized in assisting persons and groups damaged by inhumane actions; others deal with migration. They include such organizations as national Red Cross Societies; the several large religious welfare organizations, such as the Catholic Relief Services in the United States; organizations aimed at specific groups in the population, such as Save the Children Federation; or those operating mainly through development projects to ease intolerable conditions, such as Oxfam. Their geographical range is wide but far from universal, as both their presence and their field work ultimately depends on the tolerance of national authorities.²⁴

An assortment of academic researchers conducts inquiries into social situations and natural conditions that are relevant to man-made disasters. Their findings emerge relatively slowly but have the advantage of a more thorough consideration than organizations that deliver services can manage. Academic research often contains essential background information for early warning and performs an indispensable critical function. Incidentally academic research builds a base of knowledge for students who will later have direct roles in early warning or its results.

Finally, all of these existing contributors to early warning tend to be linked in specialized networks whose active points can be found in the personnel of organizations. Their communications flow among themselves, either along specialized lines, or sometimes entangling two or more networks with each other.²⁵ These networks represent a mode of organization that must be fostered if an early warning system is to work. It needs their collaboration both for assembling and analyzing information and for receiving efficiently.

²⁴ Sudanese officials informed me in 1981, for example, that they did not want to have voluntary agencies stray around the country. UNHCR officials in the field supported this view of Sudanese policy. Their numbers in Sudan, both in terms of personnel and organizations, contrasted sharply with the large numbers at work in Thailand. The conditions of their operations, however much they have to offer, are controlled by the host government if it wishes to exert itself.

²⁵ Such organizations as the American Council of Voluntary Agencies perform this function in a general way; the Refugee Policy Group in Washington does so with more specific attention to forced migration. These are but two examples.

Modes of Organization

In comparison even with the recent past, organization to produce early warnings would represent a substantial construction. In some instances, the informal networks and the organizations that they stimulate have produced quite real warnings of human movement forced by man-made disaster. This was the case with regard to the people displaced by the turbulence in Cambodia during and after the Pol Pot regime. It was also the case during the expulsions of Asian residents of Uganda during the early 1970s and the vast disruption of life in Bangladesh surrounding its establishment as an independent state. In none of these incidents did existing early warning devices function in a model fashion, or receive reactions that satisfied all observers, but a flow of information was available for those who wanted to see it. Any suggestions of better organization, or revised forms, ought at least to protect the minimal facilities now available.

Four main modes of organization can be considered. They are: a non-institutional arrangement; a functional approach; a centralized facility; and a mixed pattern.

As some indispensable networks that could contribute to more focused early warnings already exist, it is conceivable that these could be maintained in their present informal fashion but improved to stimulate more reliable outputs. No additional institutionalization would be required. Explicitly impartial institutions could give moral encouragement to the networks to continue to operate with yet more effect. Existing confederal bodies, such as the International Confederation of Voluntary Agencies, which have committees to promote collaboration on refugee, immigration and migration could continue their work. In their course of operations and collaborative meetings, leadership may again emerge. A degree of preparedness for operations is already maintained by voluntary agencies. Their personnel, taking part in the network of specialists on man-made disaster and its effects, collect information, maintain contact with governmental authorities, publish a great deal for both specialist and generalist groups. They are often in touch with philanthropic foundations and always with church and lay charitable groups.

The non-institutionalized form of organization represents organic growth and natural leadership. It avoids centralization and thus promotes a high degree of flexibility, both in organizational form for specific incidents and in technical methods. Experimentation is possible, because the whole system will not succeed or fail, as only parts are engaged at any one time. Personnel tend to be dedicated to their work, because they view it as a matter of voluntary service, not duties assigned by higher authority. Networks also are free of dependence on any single government or groups of government and include a variety of political views. Thus some part of a network may

well be found by parties connected to a man-made disaster to be worthy of trust. Moreover, differences of opinion among members of the network provide a valuable critical element.

At the same time, reliance on informal networks stands for general acceptance of the present situation. Only narrow marginal changes would be possible. Whether early warning would emerge in all or even the worst man-made disasters would remain a matter of some hazard. The hope that adequate leaders would emerge to patch together an authoritative early warning statement may be vain in any particular case. Nor is there any assurance that the experience of other attempts at early warning will in fact be built into the work of the networks. Finally, informal arrangements may gain flexibility from the absence of a formal link to governments or intergovernmental bodies, but they thereby lack assured means of getting their thoughts into the agendas for authoritative decisions.

A functional approach would add tasks to existing institutional agendas. It would concentrate on extending the work of existing institutions that have capacities closely related to the assembly analysis and output of early warning of human danger in man-made disaster.

Existing organizations, such as the United Nations or the Inter-American Human Rights Commission, now concern themselves with some causes of forced migration and man-made disaster. Others, like FAO (Food and Agricultural Organization or UNEP (U.N. Environmental Program), deal with natural conditions that often can be traced to deliberate decisions by authority. The network of voluntary agencies and their personnel link to these bodies. Counterpart agencies operate at the national level in many parts of the world. The mass-media, too, sometimes can be included with this group of institutions.

A functional approach would systematically try to take advantage of existing monitoring facilities. The programs of the organizations could be broadened to include recognition of data that has a direct connection with movement of people forced by man-made disaster. A clear example would include reaction by human rights bodies to a strong upwelling of racial or tribal antagonism as presaging a disastrous human outcome. Another would be the use of the growing capacity to predict famine conditions to monitor the possibility of inhumane actions.

The functional approach then would attempt to use monitoring facilities in a way that focusses more directly on man-made disaster. It would require leadership from some source, perhaps within existing bureaucracies or perhaps on the initiative of one or another transnational organization or philanthropic foundation. But it would depend on largely spontaneous efforts to systematize and rationalize existing efforts. This systematization would then presumably prove so attractive as to insure its own survival as part of the normal functioning of the institutions concerned. If the purpose

were mainly consolidation of existing practice, little new requirement for funding would result. This modified direction would not require early warning by any particular, existing organization, but all of them would be urged or even given incentives either to attempt such declarations or to provide data to those who would undertake the responsibility. It is likely that some specialized networks would welcome such a functional approach to which they could contribute. No additional institutionalization would be required, but institutional decision-makers often welcome new specialized functions.

This approach offers the advantage of institutionalization, continuity and focussed use of expert knowledge without large-scale organizational construction. It also avoids a high degree of centralization, thereby assuring the possibility of useful competition and flexibility. Leadership could emerge either from especially gifted and interested individuals, from deliberative bodies that decide on programs or from financial supporters. It does not, however, provide assurance of sensitivity to the needs for early warning and the most useful modes of issuing them. Nor does it guarantee a high priority for warning of forced migration.

A centralized approach offers the advantages of rationality and continuity, the creation of standards and availability of resources. Assuming that it has an hierarchical form, a centralized body betokens the assignment of some responsibility for managing the work or output of other agencies and the autonomous analysis, if not collection, of data. This form probably would appeal to many in governmental functions as consistent with demands for clear definition of responsibilities and functions. If an intergovernmental agency were to be set up, the hierarchical form probably is indispensable as a means of limiting the functions of the new body to the level that governments will tolerate. It would probably be assumed that the chief officer of such an organization would act as leader in raising issues for early warning and in producing such warnings.

A centralized organization fits not only with preferences for sharply defined authority and function, but also it accords with the habitual interest of institutional managers in coordination of efforts. Complementary, or even competing, voluntary organizations now tend to form groups to represent a common view to intergovernmental bodies and sometimes do the same with national governments. They usually claim a strong interest in promoting efficiency of their work by avoiding waste and setting out commonly accepted policies.

A new body of this kind would, however, probably require wide concurrence by governments, some of which would understand that their own actions might induce early warning of disaster. The level of financing, while perhaps not great in relation to most national governmental budgets, would be represented by some officials as a substantial new obligation. It is likely

that an intergovernmental organization to centralize early warning would probably be narrowly limited in its powers. It would be subject to pressure from its own members in the decision-making organs. The same comments would apply to a regionally-based organization with analogous functions.

A mixed approach begins with existing facilities that lend themselves to early warning. It would deliberately attempt to provide a continuing element of leadership. It would promote and use cooperation with and depend on intergovernmental, governmental and voluntary agencies.

Only one new institutional construction would be required. This would be an international office whose main duty would be to stay alert to the need for early warning. It would not itself collect information or analyze data beyond a superficial level, but it would attempt to remain in constant touch with existing sources of material for early warning. This office would be kept small in size and would be expressly framed to emphasize impartiality and avoidance of threat to the authority of any government. Its principal product would consist of persuasion, except in situations where no other source of a warning is available, where special standing must be given to a warning or where the conditions have become or will become so inhumane as to require an especially emphatic reaction.

The new office could have an intergovernmental coloration. It could be contained in a grant of new authority to an existing organization, such as the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees or the U.N. Disaster Relief Organization, to coordinate information with a view to issuing early warning or of persuading others of its necessity. A specific office within such an organization could be created to carry out the new function.

Another option would be the creation of an intergovernmental office with an autonomous status within the United Nations. Such a suggestion was made by Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan who proposed creation of a senior office for humanitarian affairs. The office of U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights that has been debated for many years might have an early warning function. Or a largely independent office, set up along the lines of the Nansen office in the League of Nations, could be attempted. This last form would have the greatest distance from the existing hierarchical intergovernmental organizations while operating under their auspices.

A final intergovernmental possibility would be creation of a new international agency, headed by a senior officer charged primarily with leadership functions but equipped with some analytical capacity. It might have either universal or limited membership of states. This type of construction would most nearly resemble the centralized approach but would differ from it in having no pretension to self-contained operations.

Alternatively, a new office with leadership functions could be created on an entirely non-governmental legal basis. Such an office could be supported financially and morally by private organizations. Or, it could receive partial support from governments or intergovernmental organizations.

A new transnational office, however it were designed, would stay in close touch with voluntary agencies, other international agencies and governments as situations in its purview developed. Its head would take initiatives in studying the need for specific early warnings. The main task would be that of calling attention to threatening situations and explaining and promoting the function of early warning. In many respects, the principal duty would consist of the creation of *ad hoc* devices to perform an increasingly-understood function. The aim would be both to prevent man-made disaster and to promote efficiency in meeting a disaster that was already injuring human victims by driving them to migration. To develop its function, the office should be able to contract for research on long-term factors in man-made disasters and on improving technology. It should be able to develop continuing links with research organizations that have the capacity to provide, collate and analyze data on the inhumane outcomes of man-made disasters and means of coping with them. It should also have a critical function, sharpening understanding by reviewing the past.

Such an office would suffer from limitations similar to those noted for other organizational forms. It would be subject to governmental criticism of a possibly injurious sort if it were based on intergovernmental foundations. If it sought individual financial contributions from governments, it might be seen as excessively influenced by donors. Contributions from the private sector may have a volatile character. A great deal of time would have to be spent in patching together consensus, or at least contributing groups, for any particular early warning effort. The officer designated to direct the facility would have to maintain diplomatic efficiency at a high level while avoiding erosion of his independence. If the early warning facility were placed within an existing organization, it would be subject to competition from other parts of the agency. If it were independent of any other organization, obtaining financial and political support would be a major burden.

RECEIVERS OF EARLY WARNING

A hidden assumption underlying early warning is that it will in fact be received, digested and brought into decision-making by those who can prevent a man-made disaster or cope with its results. In at least some cases, this would be a doubtful proposition. Much would depend on the reactions of those to whom the warning was addressed as well as on the circumstances in which it was given. Mere provision of information and analysis would not by itself necessarily produce results. Nor would authority, veracity and expertise insure responses. Rather a complex set of national, international and other situational factors would determine the ultimate outcome. The character of receivers of early warning therefore merits analysis.

Early warning could be broadcast widely, circulated selectively but openly or directed confidentially to a few or single receivers. Depending on the

circumstances, early warning might be directed to the authorities responsible for man-made disaster, to those interested in relief or both. The choice of the target constitutes one of the most delicate and important duties of those responsible for issuing early warning. Depending on the circumstances and the nature of the response sought, early warning could be issued to governments, intergovernmental bodies, voluntary agencies or specialized networks or mass media and other disseminators.

Early warning would most often be directed to governments as the main responsible parties for man-made disasters and the most important sources of assistance to victims. Some highly influential governments probably would almost always figure on the list of recipients. Not all governments would necessarily receive every warning. It could not be anticipated that governments receiving early warning about the effects of their own programs would necessarily gracefully accept it. Nor would it always be desirable to make public a warning to a government, even when diplomatic support from other governments would be helpful in preventing or dealing with a man-made disaster.

Intergovernmental bodies concerned with disasters, migration, refugees and related humanitarian activities would be principal receivers. Those bodies, such as the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees, the World Food Program and the U.N. Children's Fund that customarily deal with relief would almost surely be provided with early warning material. In some cases, the U.N. Security Council or another agency promoting international security, would conceivably be the target of early warning. In other instances, such organizations, along with the International Committee of the Red Cross, would be able to take the initiative on the basis of early warning to seek prevention of a man-made disaster that would cause forced migration.

Selected voluntary agencies and their allied specialized network would in many instances comprise the primary target of early warning. As these organizations vary greatly, the stage at which the warning would be issued would lead to selection among the agencies. Where prevention were possible, organizations that hope mainly to influence governmental policies would be alerted. These would include organizations devoted to promotion of human rights. Where relief were the main object, the organizations dedicated to humanitarian assistance would be given the warning. In specific instances, both sorts of organizations would be notified. Early warning directed to these organizations would almost certainly come to the attention of governments and perhaps the mass media as a result of the normal operation of the informal networks of specialists.

News media and other redissemulators relay information to a wide public with undifferentiated interests. They would be appropriate receivers of early warning in some circumstances. Unlike other receivers of early warning, news media have no obligation to react. If they do, they will alert large publics

that would otherwise hardly be aware of the existence of a man-made disaster with consequences in the form of forced migrants. Use of early warning by news media in some instances would prove highly embarrassing to authorities causing, or even relieving, disastrous situations. This embarrassment could lead to stubborn or deceitful reactions on the parts of some authorities. But it could also lead to correction of disastrous policies and greater effectiveness in organizing relief. It is likely that news reporters will eventually learn of any early warning, no matter how discrete. In some instances, the reactions of the mass media to an early warning can be encouraged by informing them at its initiation. Slower media, such as scientific and trade journals, need not be given early warning material at once but should later be offered full information. The same policy should hold for academic and other researchers. Both slow media and researchers nurture the operation of indispensable specialist networks and provide critical review of past actions.

THE POLITICAL TINGE OF EARLY WARNING

The preventive aim of early warning has to do with malevolent governmental activities or the omission of actions vitally needed to meet an acceptable international standard. Early warning directed to prevention impinges on decisions already taken and implies a change in them or the making of new decisions. As a consequence, early warning would be treated by some of the most notorious offenders against humanity as intolerable interference in internal affairs. Moreover, because human rights inextricably connect with man-made disaster, the familiar objection to international supervision as an impermissible intrusion in domestic authority will almost certainly be heard. Humanitarian considerations have more than once been pushed aside by offending authorities in the past; there is no reason to believe that this reaction will not reappear in the future.

Furthermore, the more powerful a state, the more easily its government can follow a unilateral policy, no matter what the humanitarian consequences. This behavior on the part of the United States and the Soviet Union, the most powerful, has not led to a firmer knitting together of humanitarian standards. Nor has it encouraged conformity by lesser states to such standards. At the same time, it is the powerful governments that can do most to promote the production and use of early warning.

There is no escaping the conclusion that a strong political tinge will be seen by governments as coloring proposals for an early warning system concentrating on man-made disasters. Two ways around the effects of this political coloration can be suggested. One lies in the skill of leadership employed in early warning. The other has to do with the quality of information. If strong, impartial, adroit leadership can be encouraged for early warning, at least some governmental hostility would be held back. If the quality of early warning is beyond reasonable dispute, it will have a

chance of effectiveness. Any attempt to organize for early warning should be based on these notions.

CONCLUSIONS

Early warning of forced migration resulting from man-made disasters could be used for prevention and relief. A substantial capacity for early warning now exists, but its focus and reliability do not accord with the needs of early warning in connection with man-made disasters. Improved organization that employs existing facilities more effectively can be sketched. It will necessarily have political overtones which the mode of organization may help to overcome.

Of the organizational options set out here, probably the mixed approach is most useful. A far easier, less committed course would be merely to hope for better use of existing facilities through a functional approach. A recommendation by public authorities and private bodies to that effect might well momentarily stimulate more attention or would lend greater legitimacy to what in an occasional and rather sporadic manner takes place. The functional approach, seeking systematization and incremental improvement of existing facilities, would have value but by itself would probably not achieve sufficient momentum to ensure permanence. The functional approach needs continuing attention, which would not necessarily emerge, especially as no new nerve center is created. The building of a new international organization on an independent base would seem nearly out of the question in the present political climate. Some construction of a modest international office may be possible, using existing institutions in both intergovernmental, national and private realms.

A mixed approach should include a provision for a new permanent office with a transnational base of support to give early warning continuous attention and to promote its use and safeguard its quality. This option would depend on good will from numerous interested voluntary organizations and from at least some influential governments. It could easily take a form resembling that of the Nansen office. It could have the kind of general backing given by the U.N. General Assembly to creation of an international humanitarian order. Its occupant should have political talent, imagination and openness to innovation. Such an officer would have to work in an ambiguous atmosphere, where certainty arose more from leadership than institutionalization. The question of who would be responsible for the appointment would need careful attention but might well depend on a mixture of governmental and private recommendation such as is used in the election of judges of the International Court of Justice; appointment rather than election probably would be desirable.

Given the rapid technical development of communications monitoring and analytical devices, a new early warning facility would have within its grasp remarkable abilities to forecast. It should therefore emphasize the use of state-of-the-art technology. To do so would provide the added benefit of differentiation from more customary approaches that may be encrusted with old controversy and inadequate forecasting.