

WARNING ABOUT WAR

What does it take for warnings about violent conflict and war to be listened to, believed and acted upon? Why are some warnings by some sources noticed and largely accepted, while others are ignored or disbelieved? The answers matter directly to the feasibility of preventing mass atrocities or future harm to states' economic and security interests. This theoretically sophisticated and empirically ambitious study challenges conventional accounts that tend to blame decision-makers' lack of receptivity and political will. Instead, the authors offer a new theoretical framework to explain how a small number of factors shape distinct 'paths of persuasion', including conflict characteristics, political contexts and source–recipient relations. The study is the first to systematically integrate persuasion attempts by analysts, diplomats and senior officials with those by journalists and NGO staff. The ambitious comparative design involves three states (the United States, United Kingdom and Germany) and international organisations (the United Nations, European Union and Organization for Security and Co-Operation in Europe) and looks in depth at four conflict cases: Rwanda in 1994, Darfur in 2003, Georgia in 2008 and Ukraine in 2014.

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Conflict, Persuasion and Foreign Policy

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