

## SETTING THE SCENE: THE CONTEXT

The general examination of Surveillance by Aircraft (BWC/CONF.III/VEREX/WP.75) highlighted the limitations that apply to airborne sensors in relation to the ease with which prohibited activities may be hidden or camouflaged, and in relation to the difficulty to differentiate between prohibited and permitted activities. These observations, clearly, were directed at the ability of airborne sensors in the first instance to detect prohibited activity. The thrust of the discussion was not that such detection is impossible, but rather that a treaty violator would need to make a number of very serious mistakes before airborne sensors might even have an opportunity to detect a treaty violation. Proceeding with an analysis of this kind would make any conclusions scenario-dependent, and would not be very satisfactory. It would always be possible to develop a scenario in which all sensors could be defeated. This might lead to the erroneous conclusion that airborne sensors have nothing to offer.

This paper focuses on the support role to be played by airborne sensors, in conjunction with other verification measures.

### Assumptions

1. Aerial inspection would take place within a cooperative framework and its application would be agreed by all State Parties to the Convention;

2. Any aerial inspection regime related to the BTWC would be under the jurisdiction and control of an internationally recognized organization, such as a BTWC Secretariat or the United Nations, and all imagery collected would remain under the control of this organization;