

ANNEX A

THE USE OF COOPERATIVE AERIAL SURVEILLANCE IN THE MIDDLE-EAST: LESSONS OF PAST EXPERIENCE

Though it is not widely known, aerial surveillance techniques have been used to alleviate tensions in the Middle East several times. The majority of these cases have involved the use of aircraft by various United Nations peacekeeping forces in the region. Aerial surveillance has also been used at least once to specifically monitor a cease-fire involving an agreement not to station military forces in certain sensitive areas. Moreover, aerial surveillance techniques will be used in monitoring Iraq's long-term compliance with its obligations under UN Security Council Resolution 687, which that country accepted to end the Persian Gulf War. This Annex will review these past experiences, and analyze their potential importance to the question of establishing an Open Skies regime in the region.

UNEF

The first instance of aerial surveillance being used in monitoring a cease-fire in the region began in 1956 and lasted until 1967. The United Nations Emergency Force (UNEF) was formed in response to the fighting which had attended the Suez Crisis of 1956. The Force was Mandated to occupy much of the Sinai desert in order to keep the Egyptian and the Israeli armies separated.

Initially, little use was made of aircraft beyond the transport/logistics role. As the Force's mission expanded, along with the territory it had to cover, aerial reconnaissance was instituted in the least accessible areas of the Sinai peninsula. Specifically, the Sinai coast "...from the Gulf of Aqaba to the straights of Tiran, a distance of some 187 miles, was kept under observation by UNEF air reconnaissance."¹ In addition, daily aerial patrols of the international frontier were instituted, and "any suspicious activity seen from the air could be checked by ground patrols dispatched from the outposts."²

Though little has been written about these patrols, or their place within the overall structure of the UNEF, it is known that by 1963 some five aircraft were in UN service, on loan from the Royal Canadian Air Force. The aircraft were primarily used to cover

¹ Security Council document A/5172, "Secretary-General's Progress Report, 22 August, 1962." Quoted in Higgins, R. United Nations Peacekeeping, 1946-1967: Documents and Commentary. Vol. I The Middle-East. (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1970) p. 474. See also The Blue Helmets: A Review of United Nations Peacekeeping (New York, United Nations, 2nd ed. 1990) p. 73.

² ibid.