

Satellite Imagery for Peacekeeping

Commercially available satellite imagery can be usefully incorporated into the United Nations peacekeeping operations for some ancillary applications.

Before the peacekeeping forces first arrive on site, they should become familiar with the area in which they will be operating. For example, it would be desirable to have a complete and accurate record of the existing road network to facilitate their own operations, such as organizing patrols to monitor for potential infiltration of military forces into a buffer zone. Existing maps may be inaccurate and will almost certainly not include some specific types of information which would be of interest to the peacekeeping forces.

Useful information could be interpreted from panchromatic SPOT imagery in the form of 1:200,000 scale transparencies. Using this small scale, features such as roads and encampments could be interpreted but any fears regarding potential use of the imagery for intelligence gathering purposes could be largely avoided. Results of the interpretation could be transferred to the existing basemaps for use in the field. Optionally, photographic prints of the imagery could also be made for use in the field.

Satellite imagery can be acquired for a specific location of interest for which precise latitude and longitude coordinates are known. A photographic print of such an image could be used by patrols as a guide to the locations of buildings and other features which would be large enough to be evident on commercially available imagery but are not usually marked on maps.