

Case 2

BORDER/REGION: West Bank-Jordan River Valley

PARTIES: Israel, Jordan

POTENTIAL VERIFICATION REGIME:

- National Means with Incremental Transition to Third-Party-Assisted
- Bilateral/Mediated
- Consultative Mechanism

The West Bank-Jordan River Valley separating Israel and Jordan is another key Middle Eastern border where some form of early warning "tripwire" system together with a closely verified demilitarized buffer zone might usefully advance security interests. This is not to suggest, however, that all aspects of the Sinai model are readily transferable to the West Bank. On the contrary, it would likely be only the surveillance/sensor package successfully deployed in the Sinai — as distinct from the third-party day-to-day operational management of the Sinai system — that would be useful.

From Israel's perspective, the absence of strategic depth and warning time (together with cultural-historical factors) would require the stationing of significant numbers of regular forces in fortified positions at key strategic points on a permanent basis.⁴⁴ Thus, an early warning system and verification procedures would remain a permanent feature of the landscape and not serve merely as elements of a transitional arrangement leading to complete and total withdrawal from the area.⁴⁵

Because of acute Israeli security concerns regarding the ability to protect its heartland, the role of a third party in verifying compliance

with any Israel-Jordan agreement could at best be viewed only as a supplement to and not a substitute for an Israeli military presence. In contrast to the sparsely populated Sinai desert where Israel enjoyed sufficient time to mobilize reserves, the narrow and densely populated West Bank would require that any early warning system and accompanying verification measures be virtually automatic, largely unmanned or manned by Israeli personnel only. The adversary's armed penetration of the zone, in breach of its obligations, would need to trigger a warning of noncompliance in time for Israel to take immediate protective measures.⁴⁶ Similar early warning concerns for Israel would also be present on the Golan Heights.

The success of an early warning and verification system on the West Bank would depend critically on a network of long-range detection devices and surveillance outposts equipped with remotely controlled imaging devices. Because of its dense population and varied topography, ground sensor networks would have to be configured in such a way as to minimize false alarms and disruption. Again, in contrast to the Sinai, special measures would be needed to protect the system from sabotage and subversion by local settlers, opposition groups and terrorists.

Perhaps over the long term, a third-party verification mechanism might be introduced whereby the Israeli military presence would be

⁴⁴ Nathan A. Pelcovits, *Peacekeeping on Arab-Israeli Fronts*, pp. 98-99.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 99.

