

VIII. CONCLUSION

United Nations peacekeeping operations can benefit substantially from the use of overhead imagery particularly that from airborne reconnaissance aircraft. Commercial satellite imagery can be used to update pre-existing maps of an area in advance of deployment of a peacekeepers force. Aerial reconnaissance could increase the ground coverage by observer groups and could confirm information already received from other ground sources. The incorporation of special night and all-weather imaging sensors could radically increase the time in which peacekeeping forces can operate effectively within a given territory. Finally, and perhaps most important in the long run, the increased network of observation provided by an airborne reconnaissance program could also help build confidence between the parties by demonstrating the commitment of the parties involved to reducing tensions.

Real cost savings in terms of manpower could also be realized, especially when compared to traditional methods of peacekeeping observation methods. The costs of aircraft operations are relatively modest when weighed against some proposals for traditional style United Nations peacekeeping operations. An airborne program for the United Nations peacekeeping forces could be purchased and operated by the United Nations itself, donated by a host country, or be leased from a commercial firm.