

Introduction

Much of the recent debate surrounding the prospects for arms control has focussed on the intricacies of US-Soviet negotiations at Geneva. Certainly, the outcome of these bilateral negotiations will have profound implications for the future of international peace and security. Unfortunately, growing concerns over SDI, the potential demise of the ABM Treaty and the continuing crisis in superpower compliance diplomacy have all tended to overshadow the need for more effective and durable security arrangements at the regional level — especially in those conflict-prone areas where a sudden escalation of armed conflict between local adversaries could invite direct military intervention by the United States and the Soviet Union.

Given that certain regional conflicts, if left uncontrolled, could jeopardize international security, how do we explain the lack of attention to regional arms control in general and to the political and technical requirements for regional verification systems in particular? First, new arrangements for regional security have often been considered only as an after-thought in the wake of a crisis that has directly or indirectly threatened the strategic and economic interests of the great powers. Solutions to such crises have tended to be reactive and *ad hoc*, involving fact-finding missions and peacekeeping interventions, with little thought given to the requirements of longer-term stability. Second, some regional specialists argue that the prospects for any arms control agreements, and their attendant verification arrangements, in regions of endemic violence are severely circumscribed by the absence of conflict management experience among the parties and the inability of local adversaries to develop even the minimum level of political accommodation so vital for initiating a new security relationship.

Finally, it is often suggested that even if local parties could develop sufficient political will and self-help and could define an appropriate strategic context within which to establish an arms

control regime, they may still lack the technical and organizational expertise necessary for verifying compliance with the provisions of any new agreement. It may only be with the assistance of third parties capable of facilitating the negotiation of an arms control regime and subsequently assisting the parties in verifying their agreement, that success would be possible.

This study seeks to challenge some of the prevailing assumptions regarding the prospects for regional arms control and verification by examining one case — the Sinai experience of 1973-82 — where an innovative approach to an apparently intractable security problem did lead to greater stability, confidence and subsequent agreements between the parties. Guiding the analysis are six propositions that serve to draw out the lessons of the Sinai experience and its potential relevance to other conflict settings. These propositions are as follows:

- *Proposition 1*
Arms control and verification regimes can be created and sustained in regions plagued by endemic violence.
- *Proposition 2*
Third parties can facilitate the creation of arms control regimes as well as assist the parties in verifying new agreements.
- *Proposition 3*
Effective verification measures can contribute significantly to risk management and confidence-building in disputes where there is little or no history of conflict management.
- *Proposition 4*
Technology-intensive verification procedures can be integrated with more traditional kinds of peacekeeping operations in order to strengthen the compliance process.