

would be better off — or at least not worse off — by adhering to its terms.

In accordance with the terms of the Annex to the Sinai II Agreement, the United States was entrusted with three critical verification missions:

- monitoring the Mitla and Gidi Pass areas of the Sinai buffer zone;
- monitoring the operations of the Egyptian and Israeli surveillance stations; and
- undertaking aerial reconnaissance missions over the areas covered by the Agreement.

In addition to these three explicit undertakings, it is likely that the US monitored compliance by the parties using its own national technical means (NTM), including satellite systems.⁸

3(b) *The US Early Warning System*

The American agreement to operate a ground-based early warning system in the strategic Mitla and Gidi passes on behalf of Egypt and Israel represented an innovative approach to a highly sensitive security problem. Established by presidential directive on November 14, 1975, the US Sinai Support Mission (SSM) was charged with the responsibility of providing Egypt, Israel and the UN with tactical early warning of any unauthorized movement of armed forces (other than those of the UN) into the passes or any preparation for such movement.⁹ Situated in the State Department in Washington, the SSM was managed (until its closing in September 1982) by a director serving as special representative to the President. Supporting the director in his duties were senior representatives of the State Department, the Department of Defense, the Agency for International Development, the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency and the Central Intelligence Agency, all of whom served as members of the Sinai Interagency Board.

The initial task of the SSM was to establish the Sinai Field Mission (SFM) that would be responsible for operating watch stations, sensor fields, a supporting base camp, and a communications network. In order to ensure the completion of this task before February 22, 1976, the date on which the phased turnover of Sinai territory to the UN by Israel would be completed, the SSM asked relevant companies in the private sector to submit contract proposals. E-Systems Inc., a Texas-based company engaged in producing a variety of electronic systems, was awarded the contract. First priorities for E-Systems included installation of the sensor and communication equipment, both of which

⁸ Stansfield Turner, "Opening the World's Skies for Mankind", *Space Policy* (November 1985), p. 358. Turner notes: "For over ten years following the 1967 Arab-Israeli War, we (the US) provided special intelligence services to Egypt and Israel in the form of aerial photographs taken monthly of the Sinai desert". It may be assumed that during this same period (and beyond) the US undertook space surveillance to verify compliance with the Sinai I and Sinai II Agreements and the Peace Treaty. What is not clear is whether the data from the space surveillance was transmitted to the parties.

⁹ United States Sinai Support Mission, *Watch in the Sinai* (Washington, D.C.: Department of State, 1980), p. 6.

