

---

## Part 4: Commercial Airborne Systems for Monitoring in a Verification or Peacekeeping Context

### Background

The objective of this project was to examine how commercial airborne systems could be used for overhead monitoring in a verification or peacekeeping context.

There has been limited use of aerial reconnaissance systems for verification and international peacekeeping to date. Airborne systems form part of the National Technical Means used by the United States and Soviet Union to verify their bilateral accords. The two superpowers employ a variety of sophisticated systems for gathering the verification-related information they require. Multilateral agreements to date have not incorporated the use of aerial reconnaissance systems.

Aerial inspections are permitted under the 1986 Stockholm Agreement on Confidence- and Security-Building Measures in Europe. However, aircraft are primarily intended in the Agreement to be platforms for human observers, not for sensors. Under the Agreement, inspectors can use their own photo cameras and binoculars, but no provision is made for use of actual aerial cameras or other specialized remote sensing equipment.

Aerial reconnaissance systems, however, have been used to some extent for peacekeeping. During the Sinai Disengagement Process (from 1972 to 1979), U.S. aerial reconnaissance aircraft were used extensively.<sup>20</sup> United Nations peacekeeping forces in Yemen (the United Nations Yemen Observer Mission — UNYOM) made use of eight reconnaissance aircraft to cope with the mountainous terrain of the area. However, most peacekeeping operations to date have relied more upon ground-based observers for gathering of information.

Airborne reconnaissance systems will likely become more important in the future for verification of arms control agreements and for confidence building. Aerial inspections may play a significant role in the verification of a Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE) Treaty. Negotiations are also under way for an Open Skies Treaty to permit aerial reconnaissance overflights in the Atlantic-to-the-Urals region as a confidence-building measure.