

I. INTRODUCTION

In the past, United Nations peacekeeping efforts have depended on traditional methods of monitoring for the surveillance and supervision of combatant forces. Patrolling and surveillance of borders, demilitarized zones and coastlines have been conducted primarily by use of ground-based personnel in vehicles, on boats or on foot. Aerial patrols, if used at all, have been normally focussed on the daytime visual reconnaissance of key areas. United Nations peacekeeping operations, however, often involve extremely large territories which would seem to invite the use of more efficient and effective techniques of large scale monitoring.

The use of airborne imagery in support of peacekeeping missions is not unprecedented. During the Sinai Disengagement Process (1972 - 1979), American aerial photo reconnaissance was used extensively for information gathering purposes. In the Yemen in 1963 - 1964, UNYOM was one of the few examples where overhead reconnaissance was used directly in United Nations peacekeeping. In this case, the United Nations had the support of eight reconnaissance aircraft because of the mountainous terrain and difficult accessibility for ground troops. In Central America, ONUCA is currently planning to use eight light helicopters for reconnaissance purposes.

In future operations, the incorporation of airborne imagery sensors into an aerial patrolling program could enable United Nations peacekeeping forces to operate over larger and more remote areas during both daytime and nighttime. Information from these operations could give ground-based United Nations personnel data not normally available to them because of distance or darkness.

Sophisticated forms of overhead imagery are available that could widen the window of observation opportunity. Synthetic aperture radars for an all-weather, day or night capability and