

of the continent's inhabitants. Moreover, the existence of two relatively coherent security organizations, each headed by a superpower which had come to the recognition that conflict between them would serve no purpose, lent an air of stability to the security structure of the continent. In this atmosphere, it was possible to explore relatively modest confidence-building ideas. Over time, these ideas could be expanded and built upon.

At the present time, this tradition of confidence building does not exist in the Middle East. Nevertheless, the countries of the region have been able to work together to increase stability in the area, when it has suited them to do so. The most wide-spread example of this type of activity is, of course, peacekeeping, and, most importantly for this paper, in the application of aerial monitoring to peacekeeping tasks (see Annex A).

The negotiations in the European region emphasized an Open Skies regime which recognizes the ability of individual members to perform the overflights themselves. This reliance on individual nations to permit others to overfly themselves may not be desirable or possible in an Open Skies regime in the Middle East, at least not for the initial period of the regime's existence. Other concepts may be required.

Specifically, it may be necessary to establish a central organization to undertake the overflights. This step would avoid the possibility of overflights using aircraft belonging to nations whose relations remain strained, or, indeed, who do not even recognize each other's existence. This approach is the one used in every other instance of aerial inspections in the Middle East. In every case, either the United Nations (UN) or another group, such as the Sinai Field Mission (SFM), has been entrusted with the overflight role (see Annex A). The overflight role could also be entrusted to a third country, such as was the case with the overflights conducted by the SFM on behalf of the Israelis and the Egyptians, or even to a commercial firm.

Even though this approach would remove the problems associated with individual states overflying each other, it will be noted that the international agency would still be subject to requests that it overfly any regime member on behalf of another member. In other words, each participant would be able to request overflights of every other participant. This may not prove either desirable or acceptable. It may thus be necessary to design a regime within which not every member has the right to request an overflight of every other member. Such a regime could have the characteristics of a series of interlocking bilateral overflight rights. Alternatively, if it were decided that an