

STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES
ABILITY TO DIFFERENTIATE
ABILITY TO RESOLVE AMBIGUITIES

General Comments

The concept of using aircraft as a tool for arms control verification is not a new one. If one just focuses on recent history, there are examples that are instructive to this study.

The Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE) allows for the use of national aircraft for the conveyance of an inspection team to a point of entry on the territory of the inspected Party. The CFE Treaty also makes provision for aerial inspections, although it still remains to be seen how this provision will be developed (see BWC/CONF.III/VEREX/WP.67).

The Open Skies Treaty, now in its nascent stage, will provide to many nations, not privy to National Technical Means (NTM) imagery, a source of information relevant to other arms control undertakings and complementary to them.

There is no doubt that overhead imagery could make an important contribution to peacekeeping operations, and considerable research has been undertaken in this regard.

In all of the examples mentioned above, airborne sensors were considered to play a role of general area surveillance and, thus, be complementary to other more intrusive measures or activities. In peacekeeping, for example, they can be particularly useful in updating maps (this can be precise or rough, depending on airborne platform operating constraints) and site diagrams to help prepare inspectors for deployment.