

(ORCI), which maintained an early warning mandate during its five-year existence from 1987-1992, requested the UNICs "to supply the office with all relevant, new and reliable information relating to 'political developments' in the region they cover." Information is to be based on "official documents and comments, press analyses, and reports available in the country or countries served by each Centre."²⁶

With the advent of the "information age" and the end of the Cold War, there are new possibilities for information gathering which can are just beginning to be explored by the UN. Most of these arise from the rapid progress in technological innovation. Computers communications and the Internet provide a tremendous boost to the capacity to gather, share and store information.

An increasing number of states and private companies are gaining reconnaissance satellites, which operate above the boundaries of national sovereignty and which can potentially observe all countries of the world. The images obtained from advanced reconnaissance satellites are good enough to count people in an open market place even at night (using radar) and even to spot snipers. At present, however, the UN does not have automatic access to such images. A major priority should be to obtain regular, if not continuous, access to satellite imagery possessed by member states or purchased from private sources. There is not, at present, any agreements for the automatic transfer of satellite information (or any information for that matter) to the UN and only vague responsibilities are recognized by Member States. These responsibilities should be formalized in one or more information-sharing agreements to help the UN better anticipate conflicts.

Aerial reconnaissance can also provide important information. Overflying vast tracts of land, planes with high-resolution cameras and transmitters can send detailed images for photointerpretation back to headquarters as they are being taken. For border patrols (e.g., as in Macedonia), aerial reconnaissance can permit a view at least 30-40 km into the opposing territory, which is helpful to identify any threatening troop concentrations.

Perhaps it is time to reexamine President Dwight Eisenhower's 1960 proposal for a "UN aerial reconnaissance capability ... to detect preparations for attack" to operate "in the territories of all nations prepared to accept such inspection."²⁷ The US President had generously offered to provide planes and equipment, as well as to accept observation on US territory. Such openness and magnanimity towards the UN is unlikely from the US today, but it might be possible for some group of nations to commit themselves to developing such a global "confidence-building regime."

Ground-based observation technologies can assist the UN in its field missions. In addition to satellite input, UN forces would benefit from night vision devices (which allow