

Impartiality

Peacekeeping forces within an area of conflict must be perceived as impartial. This is indispensable in gaining the confidence of the parties involved. Information gained by United Nations peacekeeping missions has been traditionally handled in such a way as to settle disputes as amicably as possible. In the past, the information used in this mediatory function has been generally gained by observations and reports from various ground-based observers. The introduction of airborne sensors should be considered as merely an additional source of relevant information available to United Nations peacekeepers. It is important to emphasize that the way this information is handled and disseminated should not be significantly different from the way data is handled by ground-based observer networks. It should be characterized by the same impartiality with which other information is treated. The method in which airborne sensor data is collected must be viewed as a non-covert activity and as merely providing support for the United Nations peacekeeping forces in performing their objectives as stated in the mandate for the peacekeeping operation in question. All parties within a region of conflict must be made aware that the incorporation of airborne patrolling into a peacekeeping operation, like the peacekeeping operation itself, is of benefit to all.