

observers" under the Treaty. With the elimination of the UN from the post-Treaty verification process, it was imperative to implement alternative methods of supervision quickly. Shortly after Israel undertook the initial steps in the first phase of withdrawal to the El-Arish-Ras Muhammed interim line, Egyptian, Israeli and US officials met in Washington on September 18 to 19, 1979, to discuss alternative supervisory options. The parties agreed to a three-pronged interlocking approach: joint Egyptian-Israeli supervision of an interim buffer zone (in the El-Arish area); continued supervision by the SFM of the remaining areas evacuated by Israel; and continued US airborne surveillance flights over the Sinai.²⁷

The three years of relative stability from the beginning of the SFM's operations in 1976 until the signing of the Peace Treaty had already done much to convince both sides of the value of mutual restraint. The successful blend of technology and peacekeeping had persuaded both sides that security need not be jeopardized by territorial concessions or intrusive verification measures, especially if the implementation of any new agreement was to be supervised by trusted and credible third parties. Thus, when faced with the inability to renew the UNEF mandate, the Egyptian and Israeli governments requested that the SFM continue to supervise the Israeli withdrawal from the Sinai from February 1980 to April 1982, rather than to disband in January 1980 as stipulated in the Peace Treaty. The successful precedent of the SFM's past operation provided the parties with an attractive option.

4(b) *New Sinai Field Mission Verification Responsibilities: On-Site Inspection and Aerial Patrols*

In light of the new security arrangements prescribed by the Treaty, the functions of the SFM along with the US role in Sinai had to be modified. New SFM responsibilities in accordance with the terms of the Peace Treaty included inspections of Egyptian military installations in the buffer zones and of the four Israeli technical stations located in the interim buffer zone.²⁸ US surveillance flights seem now to have been performed by the SFM on a weekly basis to verify compliance with force level and personnel limitations.

In order to fulfil these new responsibilities, a number of changes were required in the areas of communication and aircraft support. For example, the SFM was still limited to a staff of no more than 200 American civilian personnel even though it was now responsible for covering about 38 850 km² (i.e., two-thirds of the Sinai) rather than the approximately 622 km² it had monitored previously.²⁹ Operationally, this meant inspection teams required the extensive use of helicopters as well as short take-off and landing (STOL) aircraft.

SFM inspection teams undertook bi-monthly on-site inspections of Egyptian military forces in the two zones of limited armament (A and B) and at the four Israeli technical sites in Zone C (Zone D, the Israeli force limitation zone, was originally to be monitored by UN observers). Two days were required to inspect Zone A, one day for Zone B and one day for the four Israeli technical installations.³⁰ Inspections were conducted by four three-member teams composed of an SFM civilian liaison officer, the SFM observer/advisor (a US civilian contract

²⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 4-6.

²⁸ For details of new US Sinai Field Mission verification responsibilities see Table I.

²⁹ United States Sinai Support Mission, *Peace in the Sinai*, pp. 2-3.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

