

2. The Sinai I Agreement: The First Phase in Institutionalizing Risk Reduction Measures, 1974-76

After a week of intensive "shuttle diplomacy" by Secretary Kissinger, Egypt and Israel reached a preliminary interim accord, the Sinai I Agreement of January 18, 1974, in which a number of measures to reduce the possibility of inadvertent war were institutionalized.⁴ The measures adopted in the Agreement reflected the principal concern of the protagonists: the need to reduce the opportunities for surprise attack and to increase the amount of warning time. These measures were consistent with the realities of a conflict in which neither side could be expected to relinquish any perceived or actual strategic advantage.

Among the measures agreed, both sides accepted the idea that forces in the Sinai would be separated by a demilitarized buffer zone controlled by UN personnel. Furthermore, they agreed to adhere to the concept of limited force zones that incorporated specified restrictions on armed forces and weapons. The level of firepower permitted each party in these zones was not to be capable of reaching the lines of the other party. To ensure compliance with the Agreement, the limited force zones were to be inspected by the UNEF, to which Israeli and Egyptian liaison officers would be attached. In addition, the deployment of forces would be monitored regularly by American reconnaissance aircraft. Finally, in an effort to create some relationship between confidence-building at the military level and progress at the political level, Egypt and Israel agreed that disengagement would occur as a process of phased withdrawal in which the parties would gradually establish a new set of ground rules to guide future military behaviour and subsequent negotiations.⁵

In the aftermath of the first Egyptian-Israeli Sinai Disengagement Agreement of January 1974, Secretary Kissinger undertook a second initiative in March 1975 to extend the disen-



△ Early versions of this Lockheed SR-71 "Blackbird" reconnaissance aircraft were in service with the US Air Force by the mid-1960s. One SR-71 reportedly operated in the Middle East during and after the October War of 1973. Aircraft such as these may have been used by the US to provide aerial photography to Israel and Egypt during the Sinai Disengagement Agreements and the Egypt-Israel Peace Treaty. (Photo courtesy of US Department of Defense).

⁴ For the full text of the Sinai I Agreement of January 18, 1974 see Kissinger, *Years of Upheaval*, pp. 1250-1251.

⁵ William Quandt, *Decade of Decisions* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977), pp. 208-209.

