

system itself was crucial in reinforcing new attitudes toward management of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

However, once the verification system had withstood the initial "litmus test" of intentions, thereby strengthening the domestic position of those in power who had opted for a policy of disengagement rather than confrontation, a growing record of demonstrated compliance further buttressed confidence. For Egypt and Israel, the signing of the 1979 Peace Treaty was due, in large part, to the successful record of the verification system in the three years preceding the Treaty. With the assistance of the United States, the UNEF and the Joint Commission (for clarifying ambiguous activities), the parties proved capable of coping with small technical violations in a way that did not fuel suspicion or undermine the integrity of the Sinai II Agreement. In short, between 1976 and 1979, both sides had invested so heavily in the success of the verification enterprise that defection would have been politically and strategically counterproductive. Thus, both the effective operation of the verification system and a successful record of demonstrated compliance led to increased confidence among the parties.

Contrary to the popular proposition that political co-operation and a general easing of tensions must precede progress in arms control, the Sinai case strongly suggests that confidence emanating from the successful verification of a military agreement can precede and ultimately

advance political accommodation between the parties. An effective verification system in the Sinai helped to build trust between the parties.

In the context of this lesson, it is interesting to speculate whether the confidence-building function of verification varies in importance depending on the countries involved. The confidence-building function may be less critical for states that have long-established political relations and institutionalized rules for conflict management. In contrast, it may be more important for proximate hostile states who perceive their conflict in more immediate terms and have no experience in generating co-operative behaviour. More specifically, one might ask whether the confidence-building function of verification is less important for the US and the Soviet Union (than the deterrence and detection functions) owing to the availability of alternative mechanisms for coping with serious disagreements on matters of national security. It might be argued that the implications of "backsliding" from a primary commitment may be less threatening in more stable adversary relationships where there are more numerous interactions and agreements from which to extrapolate proof of compliance and future intentions.

Lesson No. 3: In conflict-prone areas, third parties can be essential for helping disputants manage the risks of agreement.

In offering the parties diplomatic support and financial guarantees, the US played a critical role in helping to negotiate both the Sinai II Agreement and the Egypt-Israel Peace Treaty. Equally important, in assisting with the verification of these agreements, the US provided significant technical and logistical expertise in the form of sensor packages, aerial surveillance, the infrastructure for the SFM and skilled manpower — all of which, together with the assistance of the UN, were critical for the operation of the verification system from 1976 to 1982. Through its active verification role, the US demonstrated a strong political and financial commitment to the peace process, thereby enabling the parties to broaden the scope of their collaboration and manage greater risks over time.

