

Reconnaissance Capability

Airborne surveillance offers the following advantages in reconnaissance capability:

- countries without their own satellite systems could develop an airborne reconnaissance capability over which they have control. They could do so independently or cooperatively;
- the possession of such a reconnaissance capability by a number of countries would likely relieve pressures on countries with their own national satellite-based capabilities to make data available;
- an airborne capability working in an Open Skies framework would provide an opportunity for those countries that have a space-based capability to direct their limited satellite-based assets elsewhere.

Cost-Effectiveness

Airborne surveillance offers the following cost advantages:

- states are more likely to be able to build up an indigenous airborne capability than a satellite-based capability;
- airborne coverage is likely to be cheaper than satellite-based coverage when the costs of the infrastructure for satellite construction, launching and control are factored in;
- for example, an airborne capability to meet surveillance requirements in Central Europe is estimated to cost approximately 1/20 the amount of a space-based system.

Source: *The Disarmament Bulletin*, No.12, Winter 1989/90, External Affairs and International Trade Canada
