

Introduction

On November 24, 1989, Prime Minister Brian Mulroney announced that a conference to negotiate an "Open Skies" Treaty will take place early in 1990. The Conference will begin on February 12, 1990, and is expected to be the first of two, with the second held in Budapest, Hungary, later in the year. The Ottawa Conference will open at the level of Foreign Ministers.

At root, the "Open Skies" proposal calls for the negotiation of a regime in which individual states of the two groups will be allowed to overfly states of the other group upon short notice, using unarmed reconnaissance-type aircraft. "Open Skies" is thus not envisaged as an "arms control" proposal or verification technique per se, but as a confidence-building measure. This difference is crucial in that it must be understood that no arms will be reduced or controlled as a direct result of "Open Skies". Rather, the purpose of the regime would be to enhance the feeling of security of all participating states by allowing each of them a means of satisfying themselves of the peaceful intentions of the other participants.

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