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## Don't Dismiss Open Skies

By Joe Clark

**P**resident Bush's call for a new, enlarged "open skies" arrangement displays imagination. The value of this initiative was recognized by the endorsement it received at the NATO summit meeting.

Arms control verification from satellites alone is not adequate to the tasks ahead. Canada therefore supports the call for open skies, which would open all national airspace to surveillance by unarmed aircraft.

Aircraft surveillance would make it harder to hide military movements or noncompliance with arms control agreements.

Aircraft can see more than satellites can. They fly lower. They can get around or below clouds and observe from different angles. Satellites pass in fixed orbits, at predictable times, so suspect activity can be thoroughly hidden; short-notice overflights would complicate this kind of masking significantly, and could make it impossible. Should a satellite see something significant, its ability to take another look is constrained by its orbit time. Open skies could allow an early second look from aircraft.

Open skies would provide the ability to monitor ongoing activities such as weapons destruction, withdrawals or troop movements. Unlike a satellite, which passes in a matter of minutes, an aircraft can circle over an area for hours.

If secrecy breeds suspicion, open skies builds confidence. Nations have no choice about satellite surveil-

lance: They can't stop it, so they accept it.

An open skies agreement would be a positive political act of opening a nation's activities to detailed, intrusive monitoring — a symbolic opening of the doors. It could be a clear, unequivocal gesture that a nation's intentions are not aggressive.

Open skies would let all members of NATO and the Warsaw Pact participate fully in arms control verification and monitoring.

### Satellites are inadequate to the verification tasks ahead.

The rapid pace of negotiations for the conventional arms control agreement proposed by Mr. Bush and endorsed at the NATO summit meeting adds to the importance of open skies. Since open skies is a straightforward concept, it can be easily and readily available to assist in verification as soon as an agreement is reached.

Only large countries have satellites in the skies. Yet, if we are to have conventional arms control in Europe, it is essential that all parties to the agreement have the ability to assure their publics, on the basis of their own judgments, that these agreements are being adhered to, and that their security is intact.

It is not politically acceptable to rely solely on the good will and judg-

ment of another nation. The U.S. would not do this, and open skies demonstrates that it does not expect its allies to do so.

Open skies would bring glasnost to the public discussion of arms control compliance. The debate over the Krasnoyarsk radar in the Soviet Union went on for years before anyone was able to publish photographs of the installation. For national security reasons, nations don't publish satellite photos.

That rule need not apply to the results of aerial surveillance — especially not to photographs taken by low-flying aircraft. The availability of this kind of evidence cannot but enhance the public discussion of the Warsaw Pact's military activity and of arms control compliance.

Monitoring would become more reliable. It would no longer be subject to the vagaries of satellite failure. Under the current system, it can be years before a capability is replaced if a satellite fails before schedule.

The verification of a conventional arms control agreement, especially if defenses are to be greatly reduced, will require continuous monitoring to prevent a rapid military build-up and to maintain confidence that a surprise attack is not being planned. If we remain subject to significant periods during which our monitoring capability is impaired, our confidence in these agreements will diminish.

By his actions, Mikhail Gorbachev has demonstrated his commitment to improve East-West relations. He has offered to do more and has put forward a wide array of proposals that will further change the relationship. President Bush has wisely asked him to create the conditions that will enable us to move ahead together without risking the security of NATO and the Warsaw Pact. □

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