

If the Canadian Armed Forces are charged with surveillance over the movements of aircraft over Canada and its approaches, the same organization and equipment should be able to conduct civilian air traffic control, monitor the sea for such purposes as fisheries protection, carry out search and rescue after accidents on land, sea, or air, and contribute to surveillance over the illegal importation of drugs.

Depending on the sensors, it should also be possible to provide information for many purposes such as weather prediction, ice reconnaissance, marine charting, monitoring the state of forests and agricultural crops, spread of forest fires or floods, and the detection of air and water pollution.

It is also possible that surveillance able to follow the movement of aircraft over Canada, or ships in Canadian waters, or able to produce high quality imagery of activity on the ground, would find a useful role in the verification of arms control agreements and in peacekeeping activities in other parts of the world. Satellites in orbits covering Canada go everywhere else, aircraft can be sent anywhere, and the organization and skills necessary to operate such systems in Canada could be transferred elsewhere by the Canadian Armed Forces.

Before responsible recommendations can be made regarding major decisions for Canadian aerospace surveillance policy and programmes it will be necessary to investigate needs, benefits, and costs in detail, and to examine the possibilities of international cooperation. This working paper as a first step, outlines what may be physically possible.