

The "Open Skies" proposal had been under consideration within the US Administration for some time prior to the President's speech. Shortly after taking office, President Bush asked his advisors to do a thorough review of arms control issues with an eye to developing new initiatives. As the NATO Summit approached, there was some concern within the Administration that neither a US conventional arms control proposal nor any other major initiative would be ready in time for the Summit. One of the ideas considered during the policy review was a re-launching of the "Open Skies" proposal.

Canadian officials became aware that "Open Skies" was under consideration during the course of regular arms control consultations with their American counterparts. Upon examination, Canada was attracted to "Open Skies" for the following reasons:

- (1) Canada believes that an "Open Skies" regime would enable the smaller participants, which do not have access to sophisticated National Technical Means of surveillance, to exercise an independent capability to monitor areas of particular interest and concern. In a very real sense, "Open Skies" would "democratize" relations both between and within states of the two groups by allowing the smaller countries to "see for themselves" what is going on;